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DE WITT'S ACTING PLAYS.

(Number 301).

HINKO;

OR,

THE HEADSMAN'S DAUGHTER.

A Romantic Play,

IN A PROLOGUE AND FIVE ACTS.

FOUNDED ON MADAME VON BIRCH-PFEIFFER'S DRAMATIZATION OF LUDWIG
STORCH'S

By **W. G. WILLIS,**

Author of "The Man of Airlie," etc.

AS FIRST PERFORMED AT THE QUEEN'S THEATRE, LONDON, UNDER THE
MANAGEMENT OF MR. E. CLIFTON, ON SATURDAY,
SEPT. 9, 1871.

TOGETHER WITH

A description of the Costumes—Synopsis of the Piece—Cast of the Characters
—Entrances and Exits—Relative Positions of the Performers on
the Stage, and the whole of the Stage Business.

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 The figure following the name of the Play denotes the number of Acts. The figures in the columns indicate the number of characters—M. male; F. female.

No.	M.	F.	No.	M.	F.
75. Adrienne, drama, 3 acts.....	7	3	21. Dreams, drama, 5 acts.....	6	3
114. Anything for a Change, comedy, 1	3	3	186. Duchess de la Valliere, play, 5 acts..	6	4
167. Apple Blossoms, comedy, 3 acts....	7	3	47. Easy Shaving, farce, 1 act.....	5	2
93. Area Belle (The), farce, 1 act.....	3	2	13. Everybody's Friend, comedy, 3 acts.	6	5
40. Atchi, comedietta, 1 act.....	3	2	200. Estranged, an operetta, 1 act.....	2	1
89. Aunt Charlotte's Maid, farce, 1 act..	3	3	103. Faust and Marguerite, drama, 3 acts,	9	7
192. Game of Cards (A), comedietta, 1	3	1	9. Fearful Tragedy in the Seven Dials,		
166. Bardell vs. Pickwick, sketch, 1 act.	6	2	interlude, 1 act.....	4	1
41. Beautiful Forever, farce, 1 act.....	2	3	128. Female Detective, drama, 3 acts....	11	4
141. Bells (The), drama, 3 acts.....	9	3	101. Fernande, drama, 3 acts.....	11	10
67. Birthplace of Podgers, farce, 1 act..	7	3	99. Fifth Wheel, comedy, 3 acts.....	10	2
36. Black Sheep, drama, 3 acts.....	7	5	145. First Love, comedy, 1 act.....	4	1
160. Blow for Blow, drama, 4 acts.....	11	6	102. Foiled, drama, 4 acts.....	9	3
70. Bonnie Fish Wife, farce, 1 act.....	3	1	88. Founded on Facts, farce, 1 act....	4	2
179. Breach of Promise., drama, 2 acts..	5	2	74. Garrick Fever, farce, 1 act.....	7	4
25. Broken-Hearted Club, comedietta, 1	4	8	53. Gertrude's Money Box, farce, 1 act.	4	2
24. Cabman, No. 93, farce, 1 act.....	2	2	73. Golden Fetter (Fettered), drama, 3	11	4
1. Caste, comedy, 3 acts.....	5	3	30. Goose with the Golden Eggs, farce,		
69. Caught by the Cuff, farce, 1 act.....	4	1	1 act.....	5	3
175. Cast upon the World, drama, 5 acts.	10	5	131. Go to Putney, farce, 1 act.....	4	3
55. Catharine Howard, historical play,			28. Happy Pair, comedietta, 1 act.....	1	1
3 acts.....	12	5	151. Hard Case (A), farce, 1 act.....	2	
80. Charming pair, farce, 1 act.....	4	3	8. Henry Dunbar, drama, 4 acts.....	10	3
65. Checkmate, comedy, 2 acts.....	6	5	180. Henry the Fifth, historical play, 5	3	5
68. Chevalier de St. George, drama, 3	9	3	19. He's a Lunatic, farce, 1 act.....	2	2
76. Chops of the Channel, farce, 1 act.	3	2	60. Hidden Hand, drama, 4 acts.....	5	5
149. Clouds, comedy, 4 acts.....	8	7	187. His Own Enemy, farce, 1 act.....	4	1
121. Comical Countess, farce, 1 act.....	3	1	174. Home, comedy, 3 acts.....	3	
107. Cupboard Love, farce, 1 act.....	2	1	64. Household Fairy, sketch, 1 act....	1	
152. Cupid's Eye-Glass, comedy, 1 act...	1	1	190. Hunting the Slipper, farce, 1 act....	1	
52. Cup of Tea, comedietta, 1 act.....	3	1	191. High C, comedietta, 1 act.....	2	
148. Cut off with a Shilling, comedietta,			197. Hunchback (The), play, 5 acts.....	1	2
1 act.....	2	1	18. If I Had a Thousand a Year, farce,		
113. Cyrill's Success, comedy, 5 acts.....	10	4	1 act.....	4	3
199. Captain of the Watch (The), come-			116. I'm Not Meself at All, original Irish		
dietta, 1 act.....	4	2	stew, 1 act.....	3	3
20. Daddy Gray, drama, 3 acts.....	8	4	129. In for a Holiday, farce, 1 act.....	2	3
4. Dandelion's Dodges, farce, 1 act....	4	2	159. In the Wrong House, farce, 1 act...	2	
22. David Garrick, comedy, 3 acts.....	8	3	122. Isabella Orsini, drama, 4 acts.....	1	4
96. Dearest Mamma, comedietta, 1 act,	4	3	177. I Shall Invite the Major, comedy, 1		
15. Dearer than Life, drama, 3 acts.....	6	5	100. Jack Long, drama, 2 acts.....	2	
58. Deborah (Leah) drama, 3 acts.....	7	6	139. Joy is Dangerous, comedy, 2 acts...	3	
125. Deerfoot, farce, 1 act.....	5	1	17. Kind to a Fault, comedy, 2 acts....	4	
71. Doing for the Best, drama, 2 acts..	5	3	86. Lady of Lyons, play, 5 acts.....	12	5
144. Dollars and Cents, comedy, 3 acts..	9	4	72. Lame Excuse, farce, 1 act.....	4	3

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TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

A DESCRIPTION OF THE COSTUMES—CAST OF THE CHARACTERS—EN-
TRANCES AND EXITS—RELATIVE POSITIONS OF THE PER-
FORMERS ON THE STAGE, AND THE WHOLE
OF THE STAGE BUSINESS.

NEW YORK:
ROBERT M. DE WITT, Publisher,
No. 33 ROSE STREET.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

*Queen's Theatre,
London, Sept. 9, 1871.*

PROLOGUE.

Marquart (the Younger Son).....	Mr. W. D. GRESHAM.
Sebald.....	Mr. J. GARDINER.
John Volksam.....	Mr. R. CATHCART.
Erlbacher (a Senator).....	Mr. W. HOWARD.
Two Clerks.....	} Mr. THOMPSON. } Mr. JONES.
Dame Margaret Volkner (Widow of the Burgomaster of Nurn- berg).....	Mrs. BILLINGTON.
Beata (her Daughter and Sister to Marquart).....	Miss BENTHAM.
Sabina (John's wife).....	Mrs. GRAHAM.

THE PLAY.

Henrico (Son of Margaret Volkner—Lead).....	Mr. H. VEZIN.
Wenzel (King of Bohemia—Heavy Lead).....	Mr. G. RIGNOLD.
Steinhertz (the Headsman).....	Mr. RYDER.
Marquart (Son of Margaret Volkner—Second Walking Gentle- man).....	Mr. W. D. GRESHAM.
Count Leschwitz (a Bohemian Noble—Old Man).....	Mr. VOLLAIRE.
Younker Schlippenberg—Walking Gentleman).....	Mr. W. RYDER.
Younker Benko (Utility)	Mr. KEET WEBB.
John Volksam (Second Old Man).....	Mr. CATHCART.
Erlbacher (a Senator—Utility)....	Mr. W. HOWARD.
Sebald (Utility).....	Mr. J. GARDINER.
Two Clerks (Supernumeraries).....	} Mr. THOMPSON. } Mr. JONES.

Pages, Knights, Nobles, People, Students.

Markitta (Heavy Lead).....	Mrs. H. VEZIN.
Dame Margaret Volkner (Old Woman).....	Mrs. BILLINGTON.
Countess Blanka (First Walking Lady).....	Miss M. RHODES.
Nurse (Utility).....	Miss TURNER.
Beata (Second Walking Lady).....	Miss BENTHAM.
Mistress Martha (Second Old Woman).....	Miss WHARTON.
Sabina (Utility).....	Mrs. GRAHAM.

Court Ladies, Women of the People, etc.

 PROPERTIES.

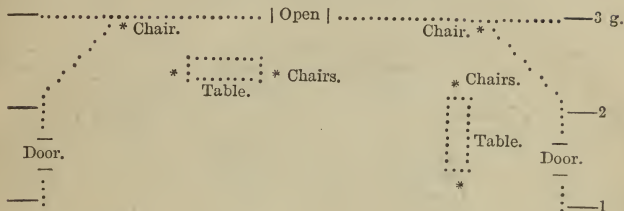
Prologue.—Papers carried by ERLBACHER and the CLERKS; letter, sealed and bound with tape. *Act I.—Scene I.*: Flowers to be plucked by CHILDREN, at back. *Scene III.*: Clubs for CITIZENS, and weapons. *Act II.—Scene I.*: Bohemian glass on cabinet; sword; suit of armor on stand. *Act III.*: Letter; the headsman's sword, two handed, with the handle barred black and white; two beaker lamps. *Scene II.*: Drinking vessels; two table seats; long rope. *Act IV.—Scene I.*: Letter. *Act V.*: Parchment; chairs; table.

TIME OF PLAYING—THREE HOURS AND A QUARTER.

SCENERY.

Prologue.—A Room in a House in Nurnberg, time 1380, in 3d grooves.

.....Backing.



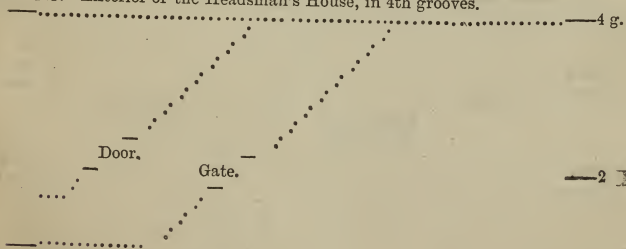
Closed in. Doors L. and R. 1 E. practicable. Doorway C. in F., carved woodwork. Chairs covered with maroon; gilt nails; covers to tables, scarlet cloth.

Between the prologue and Act I., velvet curtains let down, red, in two, drawing up to each side, gold fringe; a shield on each: on the left curtain, a shield, quarterly, the first azure, three fleur-de-luce argent; on the second, azure, barre of five argent; the third as the first, the fourth as the second (that is to say, the shield is divided in four by two lines crossing in the centre at right angles, the upper left hand quarter having three lily-flowers in silver, and so the right lower quarter; the other two five stripes of silver; all on a blue field). The right shield: Azure, seenee with lions rampant argent, with a label of three ermine (that is to say, a blue field is sprinkled with upright clawing lions in silver, while across the upper fourth part, marked off horizontally, is a white bar with three perpendicular wedges, large end down, dotted with black).

ACT I.: Scene I.—A Landscape, with distant view of Prague, in 4th grooves. Set rock at the back, with inclined path, to enable a leap to be taken at L. U. E., as if into water or off a cliff; trap open there. River seen L. Limelight for sunlight, R. U. E., throwing light on L. side. Tree wings and sinks.

Scene II.—A Wood in 1st grooves. Tree wings and sinks left on from previous scene.

Scene III.—Exterior of the Headsman's House, in 4th grooves.

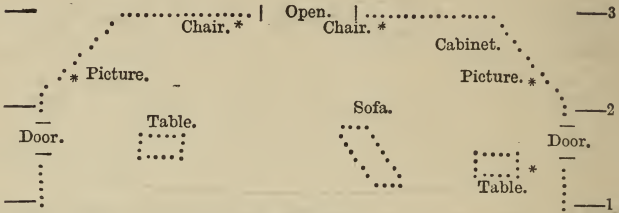


On flat, woods and distant view of Prague. Cloudy sky, red sunset effect. L. side, tree wings, sky sinks. R. 1 E. tree wings. R. 2 and 3 E. set house, old carved stone work to practicable door and windows. From C. in F. to R. C. front line of 1st grooves, and thence to R. 1 E., a low set wall, with a gate, over which is a carved arch,

with battered armorial bearings. From the gate to the house-door is a plank-way, as if the space on each side was a moat.

ACT II.: Scene I.—A Room in the Headsman's house, in 4th grooves.

.....—4 g.

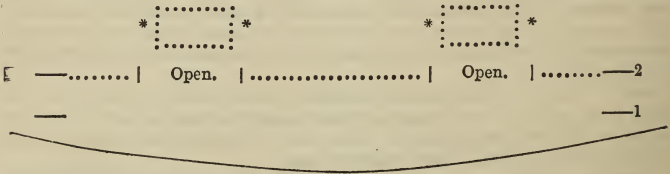


The Doorway c. r. has a lattic work border. R. and L. 2 E. life-size portraits, one male, one female, the man in armor, the left one is a secret door.

ACT III.: Scene I.—Same as Scene I., Act II., but no sofa, and several other articles of furniture moved; table up L.

Scene II.—Interior of a Wine-shop Cellar in 3d grooves.

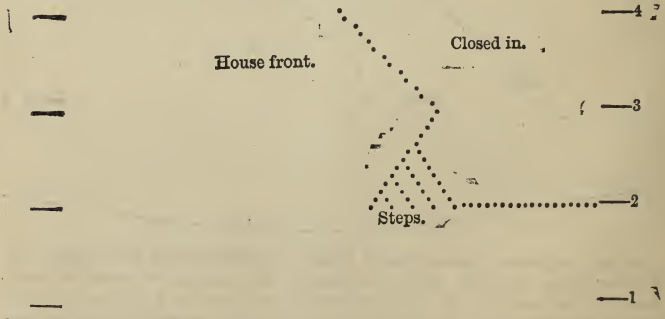
.....—3 g.



Stone walls, table and chairs each side.

Scene III.—A Garden and Castle exterior, in 5th grooves.

.....—5 g.

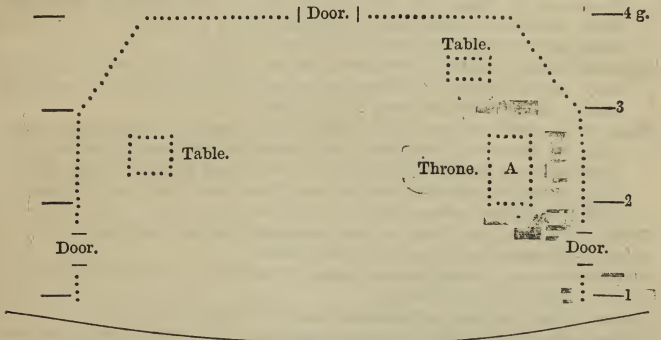


Sky sinks, with the two front ones interlaced foliage, perforated. Tree borders and wings. L. 2 and 3 E. set house front, with practicable doorway L. 1 E., transversely with wall backing. House front continued, with transparent windows (two or three stories) backed by lights, 3 E. The steps are practicable, and represent marble, with a carved stone balustrade. On flat, beautiful garden view, with ornamental water. Strong moonlight effect from R. U. E. on the steps and c. front.

Act IV. : Scene I.—A Room in the Palace, in 2d grooves. Open R. and L.

Scene II.—Hall in the Countess' Castle, decorated for a Ball, in 6th grooves. Open doorway c., in 5th groove flat. Door R. 1 E. Open doorway R. 3 E. Cushioned settees along the sides and at back. Red curtains on brass rod as a screen R. 3 E.

Act V. : Scene.—Throne Room in the Palace, in 4th grooves.



Stone walls, tapestry depicting hunting and battles; carved doorway; carved ceiling let down. Throne L. under canopy and on dais, covered with scarlet cloth. One chair on the throne-place, and another on its left; a table up L. side. A large low table R.

COSTUMES (German, 1380-1400.)

HENRICO.—*Act I.*—Scarlet doublet, sleeves, orange and black stripes; round hat, white feather; gray hose, short dark trunks, red shoes, open worked, rich sword and belt, dagger hung by silver chain. *Act II.*—Same, disordered, hair tossed about. *Act III.*—Same as STEINHERTZ's, which see; dagger hung by silver chain, silver belt. *Scene III.*—Same, except black velvet doublet, tight sleeves, same color as the hose, black shoes, sword and belt, black plumed light colored hat. *Act IV.*—Same as last.

WENZEL.—Rough and boisterous, but not ignoble. *Act I.*—Flaxen long-hair wig, moustache and beard, like the old German gods. Crown, dead blue mantel, trimmed with ermine, hose of same color, sword, gray sleeves, ornaments of white gold and silver, gold corded buskins, white and gold sword belt. *Act III.*—Disguised; black cap, blue cloak, trimmed with sable down the front. *Scene III.*—Same, sword on. *Act IV.*—White shoes and hose, sky blue doublet turned up with ermine, yellow mantle, jewels, sword to draw; in his satchel by right side, a piece of HENRICO's sleeve. *Act V.*—Rich black velvet doublet, trimmed with ermine, scarlet hose, black shoes, his sword of iron, handle and blade in one piece.

STEINHERTZ.—Grave and impassable looking, close trimmed beard and long moustache and short curl wig; doublet with hanging sleeves of dead steel color, with silver clasps, trunks of the same with silver buttons down the seam; scarlet hose; buff buskins; satchel at his belt, dagger; tight sleeves of red and black striped stuff under the hanging sleeves.

MARQUART.—A black and red suit, black cap and feather; moustache in Spanish style.

- COUNT LESCHWITZ.—Old man, a Polonius beard, moustache and wig. Court suit.
- YOUNKER BENKO.—Court dress, foppish.
- YOUNKER SCHILPPENBERG.—Court dress.
- SEBALD.—Travelling-dress, pulled up boots. Letter for him.
- ERLBACHER.—White beard and hair, black skull cap, black velvet suit, chains of office.
- TWO CLERKS.—Long fair hair, black velvet skull caps, black gowns.
- JOHN VOLKSAM.—A servant. Fair hair; black velvet doublet, black cotton hose, keys and dagger at his belt.
- MARKITA.—*Act I.*—Gray overskirt, red petticoat; gilt cross, chain and satchel like MARGARET in *Faust*; veil. *Act III.—Scene III.*—As a boy, plain page's suit, black frock, black cloak, gray hose, black shoes, red trunks. *Act V.*—Blue dress over white skirt, edged with dark blue or black.
- COUNTESS BLANKA.—*Act I.*—Court dress, with train, jewels, fan to match dress, fair hair. *Act III.—Scene III.*—White satin ball dress, train, jewels in profusion. *Act IV.*—Same as last, or a very rich ball dress.
- DAME MARGARET VOLKNER.—*Act I.*—Black velvet dress with train, white sleeves, deep red underskirt, black head dress turned up with white, and white lace (Burgher's wife dress, of Maximilian's court, time of Durer, etc.); the body of dress cut square, and edged four deep with black braid; belt. *Act V.*—Same, or dark dress of same pattern, without long train.
- BEATA.—Black dress and black veil worn in Spanish fashion; black fan.
- SABINA.—White cap and apron, blue dress, elderly.
- MISTRESS MARTHA.—White cap and apron, striped dress; face flushed, made up a little stout and jovial-looking.
- NURSE.—Plain good dress, old-fashioned, may carry crutch-handled cane.
- GUARDS.—Steel caps, black doublets silver-laced down the front and edge, red hose; halberds.
- PAGES, KNIGHTS, NOBLES, etc.—As usual.
- CITIZENS' WIVES, COURT LADIES, etc.—As usual.
- HEADSMAN'S MEN.—Scarlet, gray and black.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY, INCIDENTS, Etc.

For Programmes, Large Bills, etc.

SCENE OF ACTION—NURNBERG. TIME—ABOUT 1380.

PROLOGUE.

Scene.—Room in the House of the late Burgomaster of Nurnberg.

THE PLAY.—ACT I.

[SCENE ..—FESTIVAL OF THE LORENZIBERG AT PRAGUE.

SCENE II.—A WOOD NEAR PRAGUE.

SCENE III.—EXTERIOR OF STEINHERTZ HOUSE.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—INTERIOR OF STEINHERTZ'S HOUSE.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—THE SAME.

[SCENE II.—THE GALLOH CELLAR IN PRAGUE.

SCENE III.—THE COUNTESS BANKA'S GARDEN.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—ROOM IN THE PALACE.

SCENE II.—HALL AT COUNTESS BLANKA'S.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—THRONE ROOM OF THE HRADSCHIN.

[For Synopsis see page 39.

HINKO.

PROLOGUE.

SCENE.—Room in the house of BURGOMASTER VOLKNER of Nurnberg, in 3rd grooves.

*Enter, D. F., JOHN VOLKSAM and SABINA. They come down c., she on his left, ushering in ERLBACHER and two CLERKS.**

VOLKSAM (*gravely*). Here, gentlemen, you will please to wait one moment while the will is being read, and till Dame Margaret will come to see you. (*exit SABINA, R. D.*) Ah! my masters, it is a sad day to the old house, and to the old servants of so good a man.

ERLBACHER. I know not what to think of what I hear.

VOLK. It can never be that the old servants will be thrust away without a penny, while the upstart crows divide all the golden feathers.

ERL. My dear friend will be found to have dealt justly by all at the last moment.

Enter SABINA, R. D.

SABINA. If you please, sir, my mistress awaits you. (*exeunt, ERLBACHER and CLERKS, R. D. SABINA comes to c.*) Well, good man, what think you?

VOLK. Whatever change be here, I shan't go!

SAB. Nay, nay, I fear that you and I must go.

VOLK. I'll not believe it. They are not children of their father, if they come into his property but to the ruin of the house, and to turn us out like a dog in our old age. No, no! what! I that taught the boy to ride and to say his prayers—ah! in my old master's time, who had a dream of this?

SAB. Hush! he is here!

Enter MARQUART, D. F. He carries himself with a haughty, insolent air. He goes to R. D., slowly.

VOLKSAM (*salutes him*). An instant!

MARQUART. What do you mean?

VOLK. I cry you pardon, but I did greet you. Were you true master of mine, you would greet me again!

MARQ. Insolent fellow! I know that my father was wont to express himself with too much familiarity with his lacqueys—those days are passed. And that is not my way. Down stairs with you!

[*Exit, R. D.*]

* CLERKS.
R.

ERLBACHER.
R. C.

VOLKSAM.
C.

SABINA.
L. C.

VOLK. Man, I.— (SABINA seizes his arm as he lays his hand on his knife at his belt) Ah! that fellow my master! Oh! what curse was on the poor old man that he warmed such a viper in his bosom as that same black knave. I not know what to wish—but that the younger son would come home.

Enter BEATA, D. F. She crosses down and exits R. D.

VOLKSAM. There's another who would be the better to lie under a marble tombstone—God forgive me! They have crept and crawled about the moneybags to some purpose—devil doubt them—as one can tell by their triumphant smile. They will have all, while the boy who was driven from home by their devices and kept away—how, who, unless themselves, may know?—will be left stripped of every penny of his right.

Enter SEBALD, D. F.

SEBALD. Can I see the burgomaster? (SABINA and VOLKSAM look astonished.)

VOLK. The burgomaster! he died—a fortnight ago, and they are there, reading his will.

SEB. Ah! then there is one who has yet to grieve for a loss he has not learnt.

VOLK. What is your business?

SEB. I have a message from his son Henrico. (SABINA and VOLKSAM express pleasure) He has not seen his father for ten years, and now will never see him. But let me see his mother, for I have a message for her.

SAB. Not so loud!

VOLK. The will is being read.

SEB. I may bear the widow comfort. I would have speech of her. Perhaps I have come in time. (*noise of angry voices R.*)

*Enter, R. D., MARQUART and BEATA in anger, talking as they enter. DAME MARGARET VOLKNER, ERLBACHER and CLERKS.**

MARQ. I would not spare him a single coin!

BEATA. It is shameful!

MARQ. Shall he be enriched, and it cost him nothing!

BEA. I wonder that you would have fortune thrust upon this man who has made him-elf a pauper.

MARQ. (*to DAME VOLKNER*). You have swayed my father towards this spendthrift, this young fop, whom he had thrust from his door to starve.

DAME V. Silence!

MARQ. You have favored your son.

DAME V. I say again, that if right was done, he would have had all and you would have been left a beggar.

MARQ. The old story! but it shall not juggle away my birth-right! I am the oldest son and as such should have inherited, but, by your arts, my father has wronged me, and left his wealth to one who should be what he is, a pauper!

DAME V. Peace! more respect—if not to your brother—to my son!

MARQ. Silence! and be wronged? Never! Then let him have his ten thousand golden crowns—while I possess my father's heritage.

* CLERKS.

SABINA.

VOLKSAM.

SEBALD.

ERLBACHER.

DAME VOLKNER.

MARQUART. BEATA.

R.

C.

L.

DAME V. May you find more mercy above than you deserve of that money here below. Master Erlbacher hear me, and you, gentlemen, and judge how right has been done towards these ungrateful children. My husband had always been a worthy burgher of this town, when we fell upon evil days, and at last even the honor of his house was in peril—we could hardly meet our creditors with the closest economy. About that time the Emperor, to whose grief his noble wife had been for three years childless, sent her to this place, for he had hopes at last, and wished the Empress to do honor to his good town of Nurnberg. On that night, when the guns of the fort announced to the town the birth of the heir to the future German-Roman Empire, I, too, gave birth to a child—a healthy, handsome boy——

MARQ. (*sneeringly*). You mean, a weak, sickly babe that scarcely sought to live.

DAME V. In her great joy at having at last a son, the Empress offered a reward to all that had a child born also to them that night in Nurnberg. Mine was the only boy, and upon him was joyfully bestowed twelve thousand crowns. With that foundation, our house rose again—yea, with that boy's money, and now to him is left that sum which is his own. Tell me, gentleman, is not that just?

MARQ. Admirably.

BEA. But we will dispute it!

ERL. (*gravely*). That cannot be. The testament is properly drawn up in full accordance with the German-Roman law.

BEA. Oh, most just and righteous! My mother nursed my father warily—we know now for why!

MARQ. For her dutiful son, who has not cared to come to his dying father's pillow—though I have sent him three letters with the news.

SEB. (*comes down*). Saving your presence, (*bows to DAME VOLKNER*) that's a lie.

MARQ. Who is this insolent varlet? (*SEBALD confronts him boldly.*)

DAME V. Do you know my son?

SEB. I am his dearest friend.

DAME V. Then you are Master Sebald?

SEB. The same.

DAME V. I have heard him speak of you. (*gives SEBALD her hand*) You come, sir, on the saddest day that I have ever known. I have lost your host, who cannot now receive you. You cannot think what he suffered in the absence of his well-beloved son. Jacob grieved not more deep for Joseph. Where is the boy?

SEB. He is in Prague, lodged in the debtor's prison.

DAME V. In prison! For debt? Why did he not write?

SEB. He wrote a hundred times! (*DAME VOLKNER turns furiously to MARQUART, who avoids her eyes*) Then he thought to come home, but his creditors arrested him, and he sent me in his stead. (*gives letter.*)

BEA. (*aside to MARQUART*). We must not lose a moment. He must never come here to oust us of our own.

MARQ. (*aside to BEATA*). I have it. Your lover Schlippenberg shall aid me to delay him. We go to Prague to-morrow!

DAME V. (*to MARQUART*). You had full power over all letters coming to the house. Where are these of my son to his father?

MARQ. None have come.

DAME V. You have not spared your father a single pang, and I shall not shield you. Horrid thought! you have tried to win fortune for yourself by plucking up an old man's dearest heart-plant. You will end ill! You saw him dying for a sight of his dearest son, and you let him ask for comfort in vain. You are my son no more! Unnatural children,

I cast ye off! Master Erlbacher, come with me, and write what I shall say. Friend Sebald, come with me, I would talk of my son. As for you, come to me humbly and entreat pardon for your sins manifold, or dread to feel the weight of an injured mother's curse!

All form Picture.

* * * CLERKS.	* * * ERLBACHER.	* * * SEBALD.	* * * DAME V.	* * * SABINA.	* * * VOLKSAM.	* * * BEATA.	* * * MARQUART.
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CURTAIN.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Landscape with distant view of Prague, in 5th grooves.*

Discover CITIZENS, their wives, soldiers, and children walking about, and playing with garlands of flowers. A ballet may be introduced here.

Enter, R. U. E., MARQUART and YOUNKER SCHLIPPENBERG. They come down C.

MARQUART. Scarcely well out of a debtor's jail, he is bold in silk and feathers. Plague on him! I am not a slave, and yet I feel that I pale before his magnificence. At the peril of my life, I'll mar him!

SCHLIP. I will, for you.

MARQ. You don't know what you volunteer to do. He is a rash fellow, prompt and savage! he may slash you rarely.

SCHLIP. He will do so at his cost. 'Ware from under, he that would fell the oak! I am not to be laid low like a bulrush. By the beard of the fellow I killed last Friday—for Friday is a fast-day, and I restrict myself to one!—these fellows so brave and agile, sometimes run foul of a long sword and die of a steel ague. Turn you aside, and leave him to me.

MARQ. But the law! e'en though you finish him, the block may deal rudely with your blockhead.

SCHLIP. Pah! the king hates foreigners ever since a French monsieur killed a-cousin of his majesty. I should have a ruddy vengeance should I not add this trophy to the triumph-marks on my sleeve.

MARQ. Well, well, but care for yourself. Beata bade me caution you.

SCHLIP. Let's seek him! (*they exeunt R.*)

Enter, R. U. E., MARKITTA and NURSE.

MARKITTA. Pray let us wait a moment here!

NURSE. No! this is no place for us. (*up L. c.*)

MARK. (*comes down C.*) He may come this way. (*looks about.*)

NURSE. The last time we came out, we were scurrily treated.

MARK. I am used to loathing. (*aside*) And care not if I see him!

Young and noble, though all the young were nobles round him, I am sure I should single him out! (*looks round.*)

NURSE. The people are in feast, and they are always most cruel then. Come away—do not rest, lest some will recognize us.

MARK. One moment, kind mother! This air, this merriment, the perfume of the flowers, they are worth the risk. Ah, how the lovers and their sweethearts stroll, one with the other. Each twain are happy, and there are no lonely ones. I am here by myself, one in a million! What a longing for companionship since he smiled on me. It was on the bridge in the meadows that we met, and he smiled on me as he made way. I met him since in the town, and hoped for his smile again, but he did not remember me. Fool to expect it! I shall see his look and smile no more.

NURSE (*agitatedly*). Markitta, come away! this is no place to linger.

MARK. (*goes up to her*). I'll not be slow—I was but musing.

Enter, HENRICO and YOUNKER BENKO, R. U. E. They come down R. C.

MARKITTA (*aside*). Ah! there he is. (*she and NURSE remain, L. U. E., she looking at HENRICO and preventing NURSE draw her away.*)

BENKO. I do not care to waste time here.

HEN. I do—amusement waits for no man—one must clutch its glittering pinions as it flutters by. Ah! man, the prison is but a dull place to study the pleasures of the world in.

BENKO. Pleasures of the world are well enough in their degrees, but I prefer the higher. Here the shouts of boorish laughter are all low notes.

HEN. And I like to hear all of them in the gamut, I like to enjoy the people's festival. What a happy time!

MARK. (*to NURSE*). I pray you wait.

HEN. There is something to me sweet even in the coarse expressions of such company. I ask not for refinements which blanch the yellow gold into a pallid silver—no! what more worth living for than to take pleasures as they come, whilst you are in good health.

NURSE. Come away, they are looking at us. I am half frightened.

MARK. Yes, we will come home. This is not the world for us, mother. Ah! here comes the Countess! (*looks L.*) Methinks his eye gleams brighter as if he felt that she was nearer. Ah! what a gulf between us! Fairer than her few men can love! my heart aches to confess it—but—I marvel not that he should look upon her—for she is—how beautiful!

[*Exeunt, MARKITTA and NURSE, R. U. E.*]

BENK. The Countess Blanka! (*looks up L.*)

HEN. And the King!

BENK. I'll wager you ten gold pieces that she will notice me before she does you.

HEN. No wagers! I know her.

BENK. What! are you the happy one?

HEN. (*gravely*). Believe me! I am scarcely the richer for it by one smile. (*cheers.*)

Enter, KING WENZEL, COUNTESS BLANKA, COURTIERS, LADIES and COUNT LESCHWITZ. The COUNTESS and KING come to C. front. LESCHWITZ L. C., front. HENRICO and BENKO, R.

KING. I like that music of the popular throat.

COUNTESS. It is such to you. I prefer the lute to the bassoon.

BENK. (*aside to HENRICO*). How beautiful!

KING. Lions must like the roaring, just as fair ladies have pleasure in satins and brave feathers.

COUNTESS. I accept the compliment. (*looks round but does not see HENRICO.*)

KING. Come on, my lords. (COUNTESS *exchanges a look with HENRICO, and pulls a feather out of her fan*) Ladies are not to be kept waiting, even by their husbands, and we are not all mated—more or less bad the luck! (*all go to R. 1 E. COUNTESS drops the feather at HENRICO's feet.*)

BENK. What a sweet smile wasted on some one. More to my address, and I would come near to losing my heart. (*exeunt, KING, COUNTESS, LESCHWITZ and COURTIER, R. 1 E.*) It was not for your Majesty—I don't envy you!

HEN. He looked as if he must eat her without saying grace.

BENK. Could not you, Henrico? He may devour you before she has done with you.

HEN. It were time you were gone to your book. (*picks up feather.*)

BENK. While you are winning feathers in your cap?

HEN. Ah! a feather that the lady dropped.

BENK. Well that the King saw it not fall. I'd as lief stand in a dead man's shoes as face King Wenzel in a jealous wrath.

HEN. Taint not her fair fame. I know that lady only as one may know a brother. Let your sharp speech rather fall on me.

BENK. You are sulky.

HEN. No, not I! (*he and BENKO exeunt slowly, R. U. E.*)

Enter MARQUART and SCHLIPPENBERG, with two or more COURTIER, R. 1 E.

SCHLIPPENBERG. How she looked after him! If we were to spare him, somebody yet would have to do the King a service by ridding him of the gallant.

MARQ. No! impossible that the beautiful Countess Blanka could glance at him, still fragrant with the reek of the prison straw.

SCHLIP. She did, though, and it was her own feather, too, that she dropped in his path.

MARQ. It is sorcery!

SCHLIP. Then do we do the church's work in making him fit for the couch of wood with a wooden top. Yet I grieve to consign one of my boon acquaintances to the edge of my sword.

MARQ. He is something of a swordsman.

SCHLIP. Every tailor's 'prentice is that now-a-days, ha, ha! You shall see, I shall take my wound from him so calmly that you may count each drop of my blood that his weapon weeps, before I administer my iron dose.

MARQ. And then you may drop—down dead, ha, ha!

SCHLIP. Hum! I don't half relish that prospect. What should he recognize you?

MARQ. There's no fear of that! We have lived ten years apart.

SCHLIP. 'Tis well.

MARQ. Bear yourself stoutly, and remember, you shall have Beata for your wife.

SCHLIP. No such chance! If I fall, the King will take precious good care of the foreigner who has killed a noble, and he will remove his head from his body though he had a neck of iron.

MARQ. Would it were done!

SCHLIP. Fear nothing, and trust to me. Here he is!

Enter HENRICO and BENKO, R. 1 E.

Good-day, friend Henrico!

HEN. "Friend Henrico?" I have no memory for hangdog faces, so marvel not, that you are unknown to me.

SCHLIP. What! play the proud minion! or, art afraid that I shall not let you grope in my purse! You were not so distant when we dipped beaks in the same flagon.

HEN. Many an unworthy fellow has grasped my flagon when I had money for the children of vice—you no doubt are one of that sort, so be not startled that I waive the *honor* of your friendship. (*goes up c. with BENKO.*)

SCHLIP. You are only of late so proud—since the King's light-o'-love, the Countess Blanka, smiled on you!

HEN. (*turns*). Villain! recall that word!

BENK. Surely you will not draw on such a fellow.

SCHLIP. (*sneeringly*). Do you defend the King or lady?

HEN. Both—against such a pestilent villain as you.

SCHLIP. Villain? in your teeth! (*draws, and HENRICO draws and parries. They fight. HENRICO kills him.*)

ALL. Seize him! (*they draw swords and attack HENRICO and BENKO.*)

BENK. We must cut our way through them! Don't lose a stroke! (*fights his way down to R. front. MARQUART and others lift up SCHLIPPENBERG C., and others chase HENRICO up R. He retires along set bank to L., where he makes a stand and stabs two or three. All threaten him, and he leaps off the end of the bank, L. U. E. BENKO tries to go up c., all prevent him with their swords before him.*)

Scene closes in, quick.

SCENE II.—*Wood, in 1st grooves.*

Enter COUNTESS and LESCHWITZ, R.

COUNTESS. Not so affectionate, lest the King comes.

LESCH. I am not anxious to lose my purse, but I would give it to be the first to know what time he is going to be a husband.

COUNT. With the hope that I shall not be the wife. Oh, Count, I must have for my husband some one particular.

LESCH. Oh! I am very particular. But I know that you don't care for me. (*goes L.*) I don't deserve such an honor.

Enter KING WENZEL, R.

KING. What! flirting with the juvenile Count, sweet Countess! Stand on one side. (*to LESCHWITZ, who skips away briskly*) We would not have our warm affection frozen by the snow of your beard. Happy Countess, who can command the adoration of the grandfather who would better be at home imbibing his possets and toasting his shins. But extend your rule. You are the sweetest lady in the land, and the only one whose sovereignty over my subjects I cannot begrudge.

COUNT. Your Majesty—

WENZEL. I am but the lieutenant under you.

COUNT. The king does not cease to reign.

WENZ. Yet he could trust you to reign over him.

COUNT. Your Majesty does me too much honor to talk so highly of me.

WENZ. I like you thus. We must not lose you from our court. Why did you not marry Count Rainault as we proposed?

COUNT. Because I would not.

WENZ. 'Sdeath, and *why* would you not?

COUNT. Because I do not like him.

WENZ. Not like him! And why don't you like him?

COUNT. Because I can't love him.

WENZ. Then you shan't love him! I will lay his head at your feet! But—why won't you love him? Is he not the handsomest fellow in my kingdom?

COUNT. I don't like him!

WENZ. Disobey my orders. Do you expect me to marry you myself? You shall marry him.

COUNT. (*laughs a long peal of merry defiant laughter*). Ha, ha, ha! I will not.

WENZ. Do you love any one else?

COUNT. That might be!

WENZ. Tell me his name! and I'll have my bloodhounds tear him to pieces!

LESCH. (*in terror*). It is not me, my liege!

COUNT. He has no fear, or I would marry none but him.

WENZ. Tell me his name! my dogs thirst for a bleeding.

COUNT. They will not touch him.

WENZ. What mockery is this? why not?

COUNT. They obey no voice but his. (*looks tenderly at WENZEL.*)

WENZ. Enchantress! I was wrong to command. You shall not marry Count Rainault.

COUNT. In other matters, the King will find me more obedient to his commands.

WENZ. I hope your husband will, madam.

COUNT. May I go, now?

WENZ. Do I oppose your wishes? By the way, do you still live in that little chateau out of the town?

COUNT. Yes.

WENZ. May I see you there?

COUNT. Oh, your Majesty, what would the world say?

WENZ. You care for it, I do not.

COUNT. It is best to have but few friends.

WENZ. You have no need to have friend or foe—when the King loves you. Farewell till we meet in your house, awaiting the time when a palace will surround you. (*kisses her hand*) Leschwitz, go with her, and—be a father to her! (*exeunt COUNTESS and LESCHWITZ, L.*) What a lovely woman she is! one to win a king and lose a kingdom!

SHOUTS OF MANY VOICES (*off L. and at back*). After him! after him! stop him! Seize the murderer!

WENZ. What fiend's uproar is this at our very doors?

Enter COURTIER, L.

COURTIER. Your Majesty! the pleasures of the festival have been broken by a student of Nurnberg, who has slain a noble Bohemian! The people are in hot pursuit of the murderer.

WENZ. Fire and fury! Now, the devil take all the saints if they do not deal out justice for this outrage.

COURTIER. Look how he flies!

WENZ. Why, the beast is clad like a lord. He is marvellous light of foot. (*exit COURTIER, L.*) Ha! they gain on him. (*to L.*) Seize him! seize him! are all of ye afraid? to the river! Ah! he is now a prisoner! nay—he has leaped into the stream! Good lad! brave murderer! After

him, after him! what? can none of ye swim? But you shall, though, or drown!
[*Rushes off, L.*]

Scene changes to

SCENE III.—*Exterior of STEINHERTZ'S house, in 4th grooves. Sunset.*

Enter, L. U. E., MARKITTA and NURSE.

NURSE. No more venturing out for me. I shall be content to remain here, though a prisoner forever.

MARK. Would I were like thee, mother, but I have my father's spirit. Nevertheless I have seen all that I wished to see.

NURSE. We had all eyes upon us. I am sure that that gentleman has seen you before.

MARK. Not to remark me. But I had seen him before. But the July sun would only scorch up the flowers that thrive in tearful April. (NURSE goes to R. D.) I was born to dwell in the gloom of winter.

Shouts of many voices at back and L, as if approaching, thus managed. Six voices: "After him—now we have him! Ten voices: "Seize him! seize him! Ah, ah!" All: "Upon him! Down with him! Down with the murderer! Ah!"

MARK. (*in gateway*). What noise is that? What mean those shouts here?

NURSE. They follow us!

MARK. No, no! it is a man! they loathe us, but would not chase us into our own burrow. See him fly! would I could lend him strength, I have felt pity for the poor hunted deer—and now would I have less for this human stag! Ah! it is he! (*shouts much louder*) He turns upon them! Oh! he is lost!

NURSE (*screams*). Oh!

MARK. No, no, he is up again! He tends this way. (*louder*) Here, here! save yourself!

Enter HENRICO, L. U. E., as if exhausted, with drawn sword.

Tis he!

Enter, L. U. E., MARQUART, COURTIERS and CITIZENS. They try to strike HENRICO. He falls in the gateway, where MARKITTA drags him in by seizing him under the armpits, assisted by NURSE. Tableau.

MARK. Back! King's privilege! Back! This is a royal sanctuary, where none dare enter! (*all recede. Picture.*)

SLOW CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Interior of STEINHERTZ'S house, a room and balcony overlooking fields in 4th grooves. Night. Gas down in U. E. R., and L.*

Discover MARKITTA seated L. C., watching HENRICO asleep on sofa L. C. front. A German song is sung in sotto-voce by men's voices at back.

MARK. It is time he woke, for his hour is almost at hand. I am like a witch who has inspired a puppet: I give him life but for it to be taken away again. I hear in my heart two voices. "Awake!" one of them says, "awake, and prepare for your death!" And the other, "Awake no more! but try to find in sleep that death which is no more than a sleep!"

VOICES (*at back*). Come out! Thrust him out!

MARK. He does not hear those voices. They too have kept sleepless watch throughout the long night, but their's is a vigil of hate, whilst mine—yes, I may say it over him who will so soon be a corpse—mine was a watch of love. Beset with enemies, what hope is there to baffle them and shield him? And, alas! even could I offer him his safety, would he accept it from such hands as mine? And yet, as death may be dealt by the meanest, most despised of creatures, why should one refuse life from any hand? How restlessly he sleeps. He smiles! I know he has dreams of her! For love he must live. My father's potions have but half done the work—the rest is by his yearning for the lovely Countess. I shall never be in his good graces but a stepping-stone to her! (*rises*) Alas! the curse of my birth never fell upon me till now? My father will have saved him, but the peace of my heart is lost forever.

SHOUTS (*as before*). Turn him out to us!

MARK. I must wake him! Sir! sir!

HEN. (*half rises and stares around*). Where am I? I have been dreaming! (*sits up*) What sweet vision are you? What sumptuous room am I now sheltered by? I am dazed and strangely bewildered. Is it some deception, or am I in my senses? Yet it seems that I live and breathe. I know not you—nor this place. Lady, I fear that my brain wanders. How I came here, and what has brought me, is clean lost to me. Whose house is this?

MARK. (*sadly*). Do not ask.

HEN. What is your name?

MARK. I have none.

HEN. And your family?

MARK. It is nameless.

HEN. You but deepen the clouds of the enigma. Let me see! Your face is vaguely visible in my late dreams. Have I not remembrance of—a race for life—I sought for refuge, and you saved me. Ah! (*rises*) I am in the Countess Blanka's house.

MARK. This is my father's house. I know the lady by her name, but this is quite another place. (*rises*.)

HEN. I remember now—you saved me, gave me shelter. (*he is very weak and can hardly stand. He goes to R. table and leans on it.*)

MARK. Yes, you were hunted to our door, and I dragged you in. Do you not remember that?

HEN. Yes. But why was I hunted—and by whom?

MARK. A throng of dusty, breathless men, hot-foot for murder, followed in your track.

HEN. No, lady, I do not recall the reason.

MARK. Three days ago, you slew a Bohemian.

HEN. Aye! I remember! It was at the feast! A fellow insulted me, and on the first word, whipped me out his rapier, and fell upon me.

MARK. You slew him.

HEN. Yes—he scarcely gave me time to draw—and then i'faith! I ran him through.

MARK. Alas! you know not the consequences of that act.

HEN. (*laughing*). No man knows the consequences more than I. No sooner had the knave fallen than the whole town rose and hunted me

like a deer. I had better have had a wasp-nest about my ears. I plunged into the river, but that seemed not to cool their ardor. In brief, weary and footsore, I was overtaken and beaten down at your doorway—no more I know but that your arms seemed raised to shield me. 'Twas time. (*sits at R. table*) Three days ago, you say? three ages! and I have passed that time buried in sleep! how strange.

MARK. (*aside*). How can I tell him? (*aloud*). You have been wounded, too.

HEN. Ah! (*feels his breast*) no doubt. But I must go. Three days! How can I keep the appointment.

MARK. (*goes up c.*). Look! (*HENRICO goes up c.*)

VOICES (*at back*). Ah! (*in hate and exultation.*)

HEN. Who are they?

MARK. They wait for you. The officers of justice. You must forget your countess.

HEN. I killed the fellow in fair fight.

MARK. But you a stranger, have slain a Bohemian—your life is forfeit.

HEN. (*feels for his sword*). Ha! why don't they enter?

MARK. (*hesitatingly*). Because this is a house of refuge—a place of sanctuary, where even the King himself cannot come to drag you out before the hour.

SHOUTS (*as before*). Bring him out! Ha!

HEN. You say, the King himself cannot come here before the hour of sanctuary passes. What is this house where power of a monarch is palsied on the threshold? I seem not yet to have emerged from the realm of dreams, and hear these strange words as one might listen to the folk of fableland. Is this a holy building?

MARK. My father is not a churchman, but he stands between the church and the grave.

HEN. What is your father? Who is he that kings durst not intrude upon. Your father?

MARK. He is the headsman.

HEN. The headsman! (*falls into chair by table R., and rests his arm on the table.*)

MARK. Scorn me not!

HEN. There is no room in my puzzled head for scorn. Tell me—I do not dream—you said, you rescued me, that your father is the executioner, that men wait without a-thirst to have my life! Is all this real?

MARK. Yes, my father has saved your life—I have watched you all these nights. Alas, yes, your life is forfeit. My father, whose art has saved your life to-day, must perhaps sever your head from the body on the block to-morrow!

HEN. I will appeal to the King.

MARK. (*c.*). Alas, he is merciless!

HEN. Then, is there no escape? (*MARKITTA shakes her head despairingly*) Is there no outlet by which I can evade them? No secret hiding-place contrived in the walls, where I may lie till they have left the house, hopeless? Oh, I must not die! I have so much to live for! Find me some dungeon, yea, a prison, where I may dwell secure from search, for I must live—you hear me, I am too young—I may be too happy so to die!

MARK. There is none! no, no.

HEN. Give me a weapon, I will go out and meet them (*rises.*)

MARK. One man, weak, lost beforehand, against a host—look out again!

HEN. Is there no help?

MARK. None. I would give my life to make you happy?

HEN. Yet I must live! My honor! If I do not go, I must forget

that! and death is not so bitter. What have you done while I lay ill—you say your father healed me—but his drugs have preyed upon my heart—you have stifled all manhood in me! (*animatedly, but hoarse as if his voice was affected by his weakness*) Dalilah! while I slept, you have shorn me of my strength! And now you cry: "The Philistines be on you!" Give me a sword! help—help! (*MARKITTA comes to support him. He repulses her and staggers to chair by table L.*) Don't touch me!

MARK. Yes. It is our common lot. That's right, loathe me—repel me. I am used to that! It is your kindness that would more wound me. I know that my company is disgrace, my touch contamination.

HEN. Lady, forgive me.

MARK. I do not ask your pity. You do not know how pity is no lightener of our griefs. We here must shun the daylight, and only in the twilight creep out into places deserted by mankind. Rather should I pity you! for you are hopeless, and we are broken to our chains, and there are hours when we do not feel their weight.

HEN. Your voice is like all women's—in its notes sweet hope doth ever find an echo. You preach to me that death is nigh and to avoid it impossible, and still I cling to life, confident that it will guard me from its enemies. Oh, if you knew how to redeem his word, a man may be so base that scarcely can he recognize himself. I have promised, and I cannot keep my word, unless I take to the air like a bat or tunnel in the ground, a coward mole, beneath or far above mine enemies. So could I cower—lost to honor to save that honor! The summons of the Judge awaits me, and I seek to flee from His eye. Your father's cares have saved me, but to be lost again. Spare me! I am but a wounded man, who has fallen into the power of banditti! Surely there is some loophole from this red future? Awful task, to try to meet one's death with patience when never did I have more dire need to live. It would be nothing, were I still a man! But your father's medicines have weakened my courage, destroyed my vigor, deprived me of my wits! I must die—oh, let me die a man! (*falls on one knee to MARKITTA. Hoarsely*) A man! (*hangs his head and arms as if exhausted.*)

MARK. Oh, sir! (*tearfully, reluctantly*) There is—one chance.

HEN. (*springs to his feet*). One chance! Oh, name it?

MARK. I do not dare.

HEN. Ah! (*falls into chair at R. table*) it is dishonorable?

MARK. Yes.

HEN. (*widely*). Don't tempt me now! (*lets his head fall on his arms on the table. In a broken voice*) Don't tempt me now!

MARK. Dishonor in silence is not so keen.

HEN. What did you say? that there was *one* chance? Say it—unless it is some mockery to a dying man. (*lifts his head.*)

MARK. A dying man! (*sadly.*)

HEN. What better am I! a narrow plank but keeps the bloodhounds from me! Why let me linger in my agony! unbar the door—set free the casement! all will be ended the sooner. Yet you said, there is one chance?

MARK. To save your life, you must become the Headsman's bond!

HEN. What is that?

MARK. One who of his own free will devotes himself to my father's office.

HEN. A headsman!

MARK. That you may live!

HEN. Oh, this is worse than death!

MARK. Not *worse* than death! The hour is nearly struck. Upon the headsman's successor alone the King cannot lay his hand, and his officers

will shrink appalled. It is to save your life! What will you lose? You are a stranger in the town, here your name will never be known, this house is a tomb whence you will never go, and no one will know of your station.

HEN. None but myself; and to an honest man, self-consciousness of shame is the greatest wound of all!

MARK. Am I so vile a thing? Did I not watch by your side, and nurse you all these long hours? Am I less than woman? Yes I—I am the headsman's daughter! Take your road to safety—you have but two minutes to decide.

HEN. You know not what you urge!

MARK. (*more and more warmly*). My father will spare you from the duties of your office. After a while, your crime will be forgotten, and, who knows? trust to me to find some way to freedom. Ah! they pity the parricide led out to die, but they have none for the headsman and his daughter! Hark! the hour has come.

VOICES (*at back*). Halloa! the headsmen! where is the prisoner!

MARK. 'Tis time! you must decide. In another moment, not even my life could save you!

VOICE OF STEINHERTZ (*off at back, L. side*). Back! the time is not yet up!

MARK. There is my father! He comes for your answer. (c.)

*Enter STEINHERTZ, L. D.**

STEIN. Young sir, you have slept long. I wish you a better waking. Have you told him? (*to MARKITTA*.)

MARK. Yes.

STEIN. What is his answer?

MARK. I know not yet.

HEN. I have sought sanctuary in your house. You have protected me, healed me—I thank you as a brother. (*gives STEINHERTZ his hand*.)

STEIN. (*with emotion, wipes away a tear*). For twenty years, I have not felt a friendly grip of the hand. This young man shall not die! You have heard how you may escape. They wait without for your decision.

HEN. Yes.

STEIN. Well?

HEN. Wait a moment.

STEIN. There is no time. When a deadly thrust is aimed at your breast, what need to take time to ward it off?

HEN. (*piteously*). Hunted like a dog——

STEIN. You cannot delay the orders of the King. He hates all foreigners, and even I can no longer stay them.

HEN. To be blotted out from humanity——

STEIN. (*sarcastically*). A pretty loss, in faith! Speak! would you have me counsel you to go to them.

VOICES (*at back*). The time is up! Where is the prisoner! A-a-a-ah!

STEIN. Those are the voices of your fellowmen! Sweet to the ear! If you were to go to the churchyard and lift up your voice to the encoffined dead and speak to the mouldering bones for mercy, I would call you a far wiser man than I think you now. When the world smiles upon you, you accept its criticism, but when it despises you, look into your heart and rely upon the judgment there.

HEN. I know not what to say.

* HENRICO, *by table*.

R. C.

STEINHERTZ.

C.

MARKITTA.

L. C.

STEIN. Believe me, you shall know all my craft. He that can kill, can cure. I am known throughout the land as a skilled leech. When the grandees are ill, and their physicians and doctors fail them, they send for me, and in the dead of night, they know me for what I am. You shall be my pupil, and on you shall fall my mantle. You will be a famed doctor, and the high will reward you, and the poor bless you! Well, have you decided?

MARK. You must. I will speak for him. Father, he accepts! (STEINHERTZ goes up.)

VOICES (*at back*). Now, now! turn him out to us! Ah-ah! the prisoner! the time is passed.

HEN. (*wildly*). What do these wolves want? (STEINHERTZ gets the sword up R.)

STEIN. Your blood! (MARKITTA L. C. *front*.)

HEN. I will have their's! It shall be no sinecure! (c.) My sluggish heart leaps up again! I feel as if the blood of kings ran through my veins, and hotly resented outrage! Let them beware when I shall wield a weapon.

STEIN. Come here, friend. (*lifts the sword*.)

HEN. What want you?

STEIN. Kneel down! (HENRICO *kneels on one knee*) Hinko shall be your name! You shall wield this blade for the King without mercy and without hate. Pity shall not cramp you or revenge hasten your stroke. This house shall be your grave, beyond which you must never stir except to deal out death to the condemned. (*strikes HENRICO on the left shoulder, as in dubbing a knight. Goes up to balcony. HENRICO rises*) Officers of Justice, you have no hold on him—of his own free will, he has become my bond!

VOICES (*in disappointment*). Ah!

A FEW VOICES. The headsman's bond!

ALL. The headsman's bond! (HENRICO *staggers and falls at full length. MARKITTA bends towards him with clasped hands. STEINHERTZ leans his two hands on the hilt of his sword, and looks at HENRICO with a grim smile, up c.*)

QUICK CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Same as Act II. The furniture is changed in position. Gas down. A lighted lamp on R. table.*

Discover HENRICO with his sword (of Act 1st, that is to say, a duplicate to break) in his hand.

HENRICO. Let me reflect. I must accept my destiny. Do I pay too dearly for my re-purchased life? I have but exchanged the existence of the tomb of death for a living seclusion. No more shall I seek to realize in joyous company the dreams of youth, but shrink from the eye of passers-by, into the corner here most remote from the window. Ah! my sword, though you were bravely borne in former days, and have well earned a right to be my heart-side friend, I must know your spotless blade no more. The glaive I wield will be that of a human angel of justice—its groove red with the gore of criminals—to you, farewell! (*kisses sword*) But if my hand can grasp your faithful hilt no longer, no man shall wield you from this night forth forever! (*breaks sword on his knee,*

and throws pieces R., comes down to table R.) Ah! (takes up letter from table) a letter—from home—from my mother. "To Henrico!" (sighs deeply and passes his hand across his forehead) Ah! such a man was! but I know him not. I must destroy it! lest in some unguarded moment it betray me to the world. (thrusts letter into bosom of his doublet) Cut off from home, and not daring to hope for another home than this grim house of ghastly mysteries! Is there another man on all the face of this wide earth, who may not think of home, and mother, nor of sweetheart! Ah! that fair image, who even yet pierces the black night of my future like a star—I must not cherish hopes seen in the gleaming of her beauty. (sits at R. table, back turned to L.) I cannot seek you to ask your forgiveness. You will never know me now—save at my worst—unless my words, impelled by the fierce fluid of my soul should haste to find her. Lost, lost! I know my fate! (hangs his head dispirited.)

Enter MARKITTA, by secret door, formed by the female portrait, L. She has a lighted lamp. She puts it on table up L., and comes across to R. C.

MARKITTA (*aside*). He is alone! Peace, my heart, and do not betray me!

HEN. (*lifts his head, surprised*). Markitta? how did you enter? Not by that door?

MARK. (*smiles*). No—there is a secret way—but you must not ask me to betray it. (*aside*) He is thinking of her! (*aloud*) You know the worst of our dreary life, but I have not told you all. My father was a noble; she whom I call my mother is but so in name. I will come often to you, with news of the outer world. There, in that portrait, is the secret door. It leads to a little chapel in the wall, which my father built for us. Its door opens on the road. The key is not beyond my reach. (*smiles archly*) Some day you may be let use it.

HEN. Where could I go that I would not still be under the ban?

MARK. Shared, is not the yoke the lighter? There can be walks in the night, when the air is purer than by day, and the noisy babble of the town is hushed in slumber.

HEN. Why go where one's own thoughts would follow, and nothing else speak to you?

MARK. You know much of the world that I have never seen. Tell me of it. Then, in return, I will be so good a listener. We will speak of her!

HEN. What! do you know of that?

MARK. You need not name her. I have seen the lady—admired her beauty. Yet, in this house, it might be better not to harbor tormenting visions. Her life is one of glitter—here we dwell in gloom. That lady is the last person who would suspect that here you lived. So, you cease thinking of her—banish the wishes that can never be gratified, and live in peace, Hinko.

HEN. Would you rob the martyr of his stake, when the flames enshroud him! Let her love consume me. I wish no better end.

MARK. (*aside*). How he loves her.

HEN. What will she think—who asked and finds no answer. She will believe me forsworn. I am dying with shame. (*rises*) I ought to go to her.

MARK. Could you speak freely to her with this new world round your heart? (*aside*) He does not hear me, or, hearing, heed. Shall I gather flowers to deck her nuptial couch, and my own grave! Oh, Markitta! how love makes coward slaves of women. I could cull the blossoms to

strew the ground beneath her feet! Yet, yet—he seems so unhappy. Perhaps it would comfort him! (HENRICO *crosses to L.*)

HEN. And yet I cannot go!

MARK. No! But write your message. I will go.

HEN. You would do this for me. (*crosses to R. of MARKITTA, at c.*) What an unselfish thing is bright-eyed friendship!

MARK. (*softly*). Do you not think that *love* can be unselfish too? (HENRICO *sits at R. table, and writes*) Give me the message.

HEN. Ask to see her.

MARK. I will see her. Hinko, let me give you some advice. Do not come often to this room. It is not safe. We sometimes have a great visitor here.

HEN. (*sealing letter*). What reason have I to fear the mightiest, now. I am too mean for notice. (*gives letter to MARKITTA.*)

MARK. (*aside*). All his thoughts are for her. Oh, in what a fool's paradise I have lived. (*aloud*) And yet, is it so wise to build your enemy a bridge over the stream that you had safely crossed. Let all your memories of her remain on the farther bank, Hinko, and do not write to her.

HEN. Pshaw! you reason like one who has never loved. The roots are buried too deep for plucking out; they resist, or, breaking, rankle within the heart, and cause the torture of a life-time! Give her this word from me, and tell her why I could not keep the tryst! Speak eloquently, as perchance you may have need some day that your lover should discourse to you.

MARK. Alas! no one will ever seek to penetrate the dark clouds of my life. Who could love me or care for me? I shall pass away without a friend.

HEN. Nay, nay. There is a melancholy in your tone that convinces me that you have loved.

MARK. If so, I love no more. My hopes are buried, who knows? beneath the happiness of others.

HEN. They may grow up through them! Hope is not so easily suppressed.

MARK. Go on.

HEN. I? Well, tell her I love her—I am in misery, to see her! you are charged with my heart, my honor—all for her! Stay! can you go through the town without being recognized?

MARK. Yes. A lad who died in our house, left me his clothes. In that garb, I often wander in the meadows, and look upon the life from which I am debarred. (*in a lighter tone*) I shall not be long in doing your errand.

HEN. And will go again?

MARK. Again, and still again! So often that my light footsteps will leave the track of my devotion to you. Be of good cheer, Hinko, I will serve you faithfully. [*Exit, secret door L., with lamp.*]

HEN. I wonder that I should have found such a thing as friendship here.

Enter STEINHERTZ, L. D.

STEINHERTZ. Ah! Hinko, you are talking to yourself. Are you complaining?

HEN. No, master! You healed up my wound, and since you have treated me as kindly as a father. I thank you much. (*gives his hand.*)

STEIN. You are half my son. I never thought that I should love a man again, and then it would not be more than I love you. You have valiantly received your change of life, and, if it is in my power, that

shall not go unrewarded to you. Come, I will tell you the story of my life, sadder than your own. I was proud with my eighteen generations of ancestors, hovering in my strong castle above the flock of timid villages beneath. I had a friend, and a darling wife. I loved them, I was happy. One day, no wife's voice responded to my call. My friend and my wife had fled together. I pursued them, and I found them, locked in one another's arms. I stabbed him to the heart, and left her there enfolded in disgrace. That man was the cousin of the Emperor. Had he slain me as I killed him, he would have gone unpunished, but he was cousin of a king. Then the Emperor blotted out my name upon the roll call of the nobility, effaced my escutcheon, had my coat-of-arms nailed to the gibbet, and condemned me to death. Hunted like you, I came, like you, to this house, and like you asked hospitality of the headsman. I became the bond, and I have never yet regretted it. That, young sir, is my armor that I wore when the Emperor knighted me. (*points to panoply*) And that is the likeness of the woman who caused my ruin.

HEN. Markitta!

STEIN. Markitta? no! her mother!

VOICE OF KING WENZEL (L.). Where is my gossip?

STEIN. It is he. (*gravely*) Whatever you see or hear, betray it not by a look.

Enter KING WENZEL and MARKITTA, L. D.

MARKITTA. There is my father.

KING. Well, sweetheart, not married yet?

MARK. Jest not with me!

KING. Verily, women have become transformed into stinging nettles! Ah, gossip, I want you.

STEIN. What's the matter now?

KING. Oh! those priests are stirring, and my cousin of Moravia is getting unruly. It is quite time that I saw what my people want. How can I see the spot upon my face unless I look in the glass? You shall come with me, gossip, I have the horses waiting. You are the only man in all Bohemia whose advice is worth the having. Because, no doubt, you do not sell it. Eh? (*sees HENRICO*) Death and fire! if here isn't that ready-handed knave who daunted them all at the river's bank. Good lad, good lad! (*goes over to HENRICO*) 'Tis a pity that you should be the headsman's bond! but right is right, and murder is murder! and every station has its (*pause*) pleasures! Gossip, a thought! he is a likely young fellow, and your daughter is a pretty maid. What is her name? Markitta shall wed this man.

STEIN. I have no objections to the match. I should like him for a son-in-law.

KING. Well, pretty one, what say?

MARK. I will not have him!

KING. Why will you not have him? That's the second woman that has defied me. Well, women are a mad lot, and wise is he that can understand them. But you must and shall have him.

STEIN. Pardon, sire, no one commands here but the headsman. If the girl refuses, I shall not compel her!

KING. (*conquers his anger*). Well, you are a brave man, gossip.

STEIN. I can't make the girl out. I thought she loved the youth!

MARK. No, father! I shall marry no one.

KING. Come, come, enough of this. Gossip, we will begin with the

* HENRICO.

STEINHERTZ.

KING.

MARKITTA.

R.

C.

L.

Galloh Cellar. That is where the real rabble meet. That youth shall accompany us. I know him to be brave and gallant and, then, six eyes see more than four. *[Exit, with STEINHERTZ, L. D.]*

HEN. *(going L.)* Markitta, what shall I do to thank you?

MARK. Women have words more ready at their command than men. *(aside)* I know not what I say! *(aloud)* Go on your adventure. King's jest not with those who keep them waiting.

HEN. Good-night, Markitta!

[Exit, L. D.]

MARK. Good-night! *(goes c.)* His wife! his wife! The King has spoken out aloud, what I scarcely durst whisper in my most secret moments. And my father confirmed my wishes. And yet had I not denied it, I should have died with shame at the confession! His wife! Why, I can almost hope it possible, now. And yet I go upon his message to the Countess, one who is so beautiful and so high that already one could call her queen. *(gets lamp R)* Blessed words, their perfume lingers as that of the sacred balm. I may utter them to myself now! his wife! *(opens L. D.)* his wife! *(exit, L. D. Remove tables and chairs to up stage.)*

Scene closes in.

SCENE II.—*Cellar in 1st grooves, with backing let down in 2nd grooves. Bring on and place a table and stools in each compartment, 2nd E. line, R. C. and L. C.*

Enter, R. 2 E., MARQUART and SCHLIPPENBERG.

MARQUART. Here we are! let's have a gay day of it. That infernal wound nailed you long to your bed. *(sits on table.)*

SCHLIP. Hostess! *(they pound on the table with their fists. SCHLIPPENBERG sits on stool.)*

Enter MISTRESS MARTHA, L., with candle. Footlights up, half turn.

MARTHA. What a noise! What sort of people do you call yourselves to make such a hubbub?

SCHLIP. We want some wine! some wine.

MARTHA. Then, prithee, keep athirst in patience, whilst your betters are waiting.

SCHLIP. Our betters?

MARQ. Ah! I see you are ignorant who we are.

MARTHA. Let me tell you that rumor is not far wrong when it says that the King himself comes here—aye, to this very table.

SCHLIP. Then he is found under it before morning.

MARQ. If all accounts be true, he has strange company. Did I not hear he hobnobs with the headsman.

SCHLIP. Ugh! the headsman! I have already a crick in the neck.

MARQ. Hark ye! you don't know what we are. I am the King, and that gentleman his gossip—the headsman.

MAR. Ha, ha! you are not the King—I know—but I do not doubt that you will be friends of the headsman. *[Exit, R.]*

MARQ. We are no match for her!

SCHLIP. I don't like that woman. *(MARTHA brings them wine.)*

Enter, L., KING, STEINHERTZ and HENRICO. The two former sit at table, HENRICO leans against partition at C.

KING. Some wine here! This is the place—the men of mettle come here.

MAR. Hark! ah, my masters—you are the sheep in wolf-skin—the wolves are there! (*goes into L. compartment, and serves wine, and exits L.*)

SCHLIP. What does she mean?

MARQ. I know not. Some jugglery to draw off our attention from her sour wine.

SCHLIP. What must I do?

MARQ. Leave the town quietly. You are believed to be dead. Play the dead until you are out of the reach of the hangman your master.

SCHLIP. Return to Nurnberg where I am in ill savour. Oh, you have lost your wits.

MARQ. Stay you here, and be the lighter by a head.

HEN. Your majesty, the man they said I slew, lives! he is there, and with my brother.

KING. What's that! your brother with the man you cut down—be-like, there is some foul play here. (*they listen.*)

MARQ. Beata is eager to receive you.

SCHLIP. Ah! but then if I am stopped at the city gates, found out—I play a risky game—the King has no mercy for brawlers.

MARQ. The King! he is a sot! what of him! I am not his subject!

STEIN. Your Majesty, the King of that fellow's worship, has a realm under the floor of yours.

KING. Devil take him!

MARQ. We can have our money now, all, all our money.

SCHLIP. How! your brother is alive.

MARQ. Aye, but he is the headsman's bond, and can't inherit.

KING (*rises*). But he shall inherit! (*enters R. room*) 'Sdeath! (MARQUART and SCHLIPPENBERG *come front*) The headsman's bond can and shall inherit!

MARQ. (c.). Insolent dog! Who are you?

KING. The sot! (*throws the table over*) King Wenzel! (MARQUART and SCHLIPPENBERG *fall on their knees*. STEINHERTZ and HENRICO *come front from L. room.*)*

KING. Ah! (*growls as of a wild animal*) Steinhertz, truss me these fellows and answer for them with your head, in your house till we think what shall be done with them. 'Sdeath! poor lad! you look pale! You must take the air. I give you a holiday for the rest of the night. In the morning, return to your master. Fail not! you know that I know where to find you. (HENRICO *bows, and exits L.*) As for these wolves who prey upon their kindred—ah! oh! to be King of such a people. Death of my life! (*threatens MARQUART and SCHLIPPENBERG, and rushes off L.*)

STEIN. What, ho, varlets!

Enter two or four executioner's assistants, who bind MARQUART and SCHLIPPENBERG with a long rope.

Take those fellows to my house and await further orders! faster! (*to L.*) Justice never travels swift enough for such rogues.

[*Exit L. The men drag MARQUART and SCHLIPPENBERG off L.*]

MARQ. Here! I say!

SCHLIP. Stop! stop! you are dividing me!

[*Exeunt all, L. Remove seats and tables.*]

Scene changes to

*SCHLIP.	MARQ.	KING.	HENRICO.	STEIN.
R.	R. C.	C.	L. C.	L.

SCENE III.—*Garden and exterior of COUNTESS BLANKA's chateau, in 5th grooves. Gas down R. and L. and footlights. Limelight for moonlight, R. U. E., upon COUNTESS BLANKA, discovered on steps, looking off R.*

COUNTESS. Not come yet! I am weary and angry at the slight. Why have I given a man the power to cause me all this pain of unquenched anxiety? Why do I linger? better for me to give him up as one casts aside in winter all hope of seeing the summer flowers. I will try to drive him from my heart. And yet—one moment more, I seem to hear a thousand faint steps in among the trees, and see as many vague forms balancing in the distance and hesitating to approach. Oh! I could love him still, if he came without delay. (*comes down steps.*)

Enter MARKITTA, disguised as a boy, R. She remains in the shadow, R. side.

COUNTESS. Who are you?

MARK. A messenger from him whom you expect and who comes not.

COUNT. To me, Kings even come in person—not by messengers. Nevertheless, is he hurt? what else can have detained him?

MARK. (*gives letter*). This message will tell you better than I can speak. (*COUNTESS reads letter*) How cold I am! Let me speak for him as I would speak for myself. (*aloud*) Lady, he has been wounded and even now cannot come to keep the tryst. But he loves you more than before, and chafes less at his tiresome imprisonment because it is a life of fetters than because he sees not you. If he has not told his secret—for there are ones which sometimes are not shared—ask me not to divulge. He cannot come, but I will bear your answering words of comfort with deep pleasure to him.

COUNT. You are a woman in disguise.

MARK. (*starts*). I don't deny it!

COUNT. You have presumed to intrude here to play the spy upon me. For what base motives does it chance that he is blinded by self-love, and chose a too designing messenger?

MARK. I am a woman and I have a woman's pity for all, e'en though for those who most deserve a censure. I am a woman, and I have a woman's instinct that tells me that you are false, coquettish, and are unworthy of a love like his. Ah! he is here! (*looks off R.*) And I am too much a woman to be witness of your meeting. Ah! Heaven have mercy on my poor heart! (*runs off R. 1 E.*)

Enter HENRICO, R. U. E.

COUNTESS (*sneeringly*). So you have come at last?

HEN. Yes, as a poor suppliant for grace.

COUNT. Do you rate me so weak as to overlook such a slight? You must be used to very feeble women.

HEN. You know not—I was wounded.

COUNT. No doubt, in a quarrel for some woman?

HEN. Yes—in defence of one whose honor lies as near my heart as mine own.

COUNT. It is sweet to defend them we love, and a duty. Go to her—it were well not to leave her without so trusty a guard.

HEN. What do you mean?

COUNT. If I talk in enigmas—why do you act them? Three days ago, you should have sought me, and till now, I saw you not. You might have been dead, and still I should not have known. And yet you have true messengers.

HEN. I have been as one dead—at this moment, I am released by accident for a brief hour or two to come and see the sorceress for whom alone I care to revisit the world of my fellowmen. But I am not your dupe. In years, hearts do not cease to love—in these few days, can yours so fade away?

COUNT. You are right. I should have donned a page's hose and sought you in the town. That is the kind of minion that you best understand. I am sorry to disappoint you, but I love not in that manner.

HEN. Madam, better my dream should be so soon dissolved before it was my perdition. I thank you that you have let me escape before the flame quite devoured the silly moth's wings, and prevented all escape. Farewell—we meet no more. (*going R.*)

COUNT. No, no! come back! I don't want you to depart! You don't know a woman's heart. (*leans on his arm, both at c.*) When she is least kind, then is she least cruel. I love you! Do I not prefer you to the King? I have much sorrowed in your silence. I am weak, and cannot bear such suspense. You have tried me sorely, but in your smiles, I have my balm. I have been petulant, and said the words that never were minted in my heart. Forgive me!

HEN. I cannot be hard on you. Oh, that I could tell you the reason of my breach of plighted word. Such as you see me, I am bound to another, and that other—the reverse of you. My master is a man of darkness, while you whom I adore are a creature of light. And you let me love you? Not a look of yours but answers yes. This hour is mine—is ours. And love is not measured by the common dials, an hour of love is ages by man's meter. How softly fall the moonbeams! So your image shines unto my soul, filling the atmosphere with peace and beautiful rays. Let us stroll this way, where all is brightest. In this my hour, I envy no man—and it is not dearly bought by what I have endured and what of evil may come after.

COUNT. (*as they go R., slowly*). How could I doubt thee? had you never come, and I had had one such remembrance as this time of joy—I should have been so patient! Speak on, each word is in accordance with the unspoken utterances of love striving to form syllables of rapture in my heart.

HEN. Do you remember when I saw you first. You were looking out of the window when the town was illumined for the victor's return. The King passed by, sheathed in armor, and laurelled with glory, but I received the smile for which he would have given his crown! The crowd swept by, but I—anchored beneath your window, would have been torn limb from limb before they could have rent the grip of my two hands, that stayed me there.

Enter MARKITTA, R. U. E.

MARKITTA (*in terror*). Lady, you must hasten into the house! The King is here!

HEN. I have no sword! How comes he here? (*COUNTESS goes up steps.*)

MARK. Away! away! for he is here! (*drags HENRICO off, L. 1 E.*)

COUNT. I am lost!

VOICE OF KING (*off R. U. E.*). Who are you? Stand!

Enter KING, R. U. E., drawing his sword.

WENZEL. Fury and flames! you shall not escape me.

COUNT. (*comes down steps, agitated*). If he overtakes him, he will not spare him! [*rushes off, L. 1 E.*]

VOICE OF KING (*off* L. 1 E.). You will have it! Take that! (*clash of a sword heard off* L.)

VOICE OF MARK. (*off* L. 1 E., *in pain*). Oh!

Enter COUNT LESCHWITZ, *door in house*.

COUNT. I am his death! (*clasps her hands*.)

VOICE OF KING (L. 1 E., *off*). I have you! where have they gone? death and fury!

Enter MARKITTA, *supported by* HENRICO, L. 1 E. *They stop at c.*

HEN. Great heavens! you are wounded!

MARK. It is nothing. Fly!

HEN. Not without you! (*puts his arm round her, and bears her off*, R. U. E.)

Enter KING, L. 1 E., *with sword drawn, hair loose, and greatly excited*.
COUNTESS *throws herself before him*, R. C.

WENZEL. Where are they? (C.)

COUNT. Where are who? (LESCHWITZ *comes down steps to* L. C.)

WENZ. Indeed! I am not your dupe! You had some one with you?

COUNT. Yes. Count Leschwitz!

WENZ. (*turns on LESCHWITZ with his sword*). Ah!*

QUICK CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—Room in the Palace, in 2d grooves. Window open in set, R. 1. E.

Enter KING WENZEL, L., *in a rage*. *He walks to and fro*.

WENZEL. The villain! the disloyal villain! and she, with her cheating smiles and artful looks. Jilted! I, the King, am jilted in favor of some dead-of-the-night skulker! Jilted! but I am not to be cozened with impunity. It was not Count Leschwitz. No, my pretty Countess, your bird left a feather in his passage, and my sword-mark is left on some one. (*looks at piece of cloth*) It is not the stuff of a nobleman. Some man's varlet is her stolen delight! Oh, woman, you rejoice in diamonds, and yet stoop for the muddled pebbles in your path, rather than rise to the crown jewels. But the penalty shall fall upon you. After these lesser scoundrels are disposed of, we will deal with the greater.

Enter PAGE, L.

PAGE. By your Majesty's commands, may the prisoners be brought in, in the charge of the headsman and his bond.

WENZ. Yes!

* COUNTESS.

R. C.

KING.

C.

LESCHWITZ.

L. C.

*Exit PAGE, L., who returns ushering in STEINHERTZ and HENRICO, who guard MARQUART and SCHLIPPENBERG. Exit PAGE, L.**

WENZ. Come in, gossip! bring in the prisoners. Speak, fellows—your names and conditions?

SCHLIP. (*in terror*). Sp-p-pare me, my liege! (*claps his hands imploringly*.)

MARQ. (*sullenly*). Marquart Volkner, eldest son of the burgomaster of Nurnberg.

WENZ. (*in surprise*). You the son of the good burgomaster whom my father delighted to honor. 'Tis impossible! You lie! (*to HENRICO*) Say, are you indeed of the same breed as that viper?

HEN. He speaks but truth. He is the eldest son of my father, the burgomaster

WENZ. Oh, then, what curse lay on the honest man to give birth to such spawn. What made you seek to crush your brother? Speak truth, for I have a speedy way of dealing with all liars.

MARQ. My brother sought to wrong me of my inheritance.

WENZ. Your inheritance! a hempen collar and iron bracelets! To cheat your brother of his birthright, you could contrive his death. (*about to shake HENRICO's hand, but HENRICO withdraws it*) Ah! that devil there has so cursed him that no honest man can grasp his hand evermore! Cain! (*MARQUART cowers in fright of the KING*) Nay, worse than Cain! for Cain killed but his brother's body! and you have killed your brother's soul! What have you to say for yourself?

MARQ. (*cringing*). My gracious liege, whom all your people bless—

WENZ. Peace! trail not your slime on me! As for this Hector, (*to SCHLIPPENBERG*) who has much erred in coming back to a world well rid of him—he shall be flogged out of my kingdom at a cart's tail, and see that you set not your foot within my realm again! (*SCHLIPPENBERG almost falls on his knees in abject terror*) And you—(*to MARQUART*) who have laid a snare for your brother, are caught i' the springe yourself? You have dug a pitfall for him, and it has become a grave in which you shall be laid in two pieces! Dog! (*to HENRICO*) You shall make the first cast of your office on this trembling hound! Eh, gossip! I like this justice! it is like the judgments of the grand old gods in the fable! Give him his weapon! (*MARQUART is terrified. HENRICO takes the sword from STEINHERTZ.*)

STEIN. Stand firm, strike strong—and trust to the blade!

HEN. (*abruptly flings the sword from him R.*). Which is the culprit, sire, he or I?

STEIN. I'll do the justice! (*picks up sword.*)

KING. No! man, you have vengeance at your sword's edge—strike strong and hard!

HEN. Bear with me for my wonder. Am I a wolf that you should bid me spring upon and tear my kindred? My lord, the same mother bore us—that man is my BROTHER.

WENZ. I know it!

HEN. I cannot slay my counterpart.

WENZ. Take up the sword!

HEN. I cannot.

WENZ. (*in a rage*). Oh! (*contains himself*) You are the state servant, there is the culprit. I, the King, order you to mete out justice. What is there wrong in this?

* KING.	HENRICO.	STEINHERTZ.	MARQ.	SCHLIP.
R.	up R. C.	C.	L. C.	L.

HEN. Oh, sire, pity! (*kneels to the KING*) Oh, that my tongue were a two edged sword to cleave its way to mercy in the stubborn heart! Sire, your mother has kissed these lips which implore your mercy. She has held me to her bosom, and your father has sate me on his knee beside yourself. In both their names—for love of them and Heaven, I ask for this wretch's life!

WENZ. (*aside*). What's this? My throat is dry, and my eyes are burning. Zounds! I shall cry next! (*stamps his foot*) Have your wish. His life is yours.

HEN. (*rises*). Oh, sire, set me some task of danger, and I——

WENZ. (*impatiently*). Enough of this! Take him away, and we will think what is to be done with him. I have other business now. (*exeunt MARQUART, SCHLIPPENBERG and STEINHERTZ. L. HENRICO is going L.*) You stay here. (*HENRICO comes to L. C. KING at C.*) You think I have some claim to your gratitude?

HEN. I shall be faithful to the death!

WENZ. I know a way to test you. I like your face, and shall trust you. I trust not many.

HEN. Sire!

WENZ. You know the Countess Blanka?

HEN. (*with emotion*). I have that honor.

WENZ. I love her.

HEN. (*indignant*). You love her!

WENZ. Not so loud! Would you have all the palace hear you!

HEN. Your pardon. (*sadly*) She whom I love does not return my love.

KING. Poor lad! This packet is for her. (*gives letter*) Go to the keeper of my wardrobe, and let him clothe you richly so that none may know the headsman's bond. Further:—I'd have you see her—and say that I shall present myself in fitting company for one so pure and reproachless. She will understand.

HEN. Your errand shall be gone on faithfully. (*bows*)

KING. I am not ungrateful, you shall find. I shall remember this service—I can help you, and I will. [*Exit HENRICO, L.*]

Enter STEINHERTZ, L.

KING. Well, gossip! is the scoundrel set fast?

STEIN. He is placed in safe hands. (*C.*)

KING. I could wish that I had not spared him. (*thoughtfully walking about R.*)

STEIN. (*smiling grimly*). Your Majesty erred on the side of mercy. (*on the left of KING, who is at C.*)

KING. Ah! it was something more than that. You'd never find in my heart weakness, and pity never swayed me. Did you not remark the resemblance to some one?

STEIN. He is not like his brother.

KING. I do not mean that. You know my father the Emperor.

STEIN. I have good reason to remember him!

KING. I know, I know. (*puts his hand on STEINHERTZ's shoulder familiarly*) My father dealt harshly with you—but I trust that I have made some amends for his injustice?

STEIN. You have, sire.

KING. Then did you not trace a likeness?

STEIN. Humph! they are not unlike.

KING. Unlike! (*warmly*) I thought that my father's eyes blazed on me from under that youth's brows! (*musings*) and even the soft, touching music of my mother's voice seemed to attemper his and make his words more deeply melting.

STEIN. (*impatiently*). Your Majesty bade me wait.

KING (*roughly*). So wait, and wait, and wait! and wait again.

STEIN. (*calmly*). Your Majesty will bear in mind that I am not a lackey! I have cares at home.

KING. Ha, ha, ha! Why, you are a rock, man, against which my passion breaks in harmless foam! I believe you are the only man in my kingdom who does not fear me. What are your cares?

STEIN. Markitta is not well.

KING. What's the matter?

STEIN. She won't tell the story—she says it is the result of a fall—but it is a sword cut in the arm.

KING. Ha! she is not the only one ill of a green flesh-wound. I cut down some knave last night in the dark. He 'scaped me then, but I sheered off a strip of his skin. (*shows piece of cloth*) You are a good bloodhound—can you tell me aught of this?

STEIN. (*laughs*). You don't know it, then. That is the sleeve of my bond. (*matches the cloth with his own sleeve.*)

KING. Your bond?

STEIN. Yes.

KING. What! I have been tricked, by her first, and then by her varlet-minion! It is he, then, on whom she lavishes her sweet caresses! Death of my life! had I known it! I am going mad! when I had him at arm's length, I could have choked him! And they have had stolen meetings—tender words—warm kisses! Oh! who waits there? (*at window R.*) saddle a horse for me! You shall go with me! Even now perhaps they are exchanging languis at my blindness—his head lies on her heart—they bill and coo soft nothings! oh! fiends and flames! You shall devise some rare torture for them! And I have sent the weazel straight to the eggs! At this moment, they are kissing—(*to window R.*) Are those horses ready? 'Sdeath! come, gossip! to horse, to horse! (*drags STEINHERTZ off L.*)

Scene changes to

SCENE II.—Room in residence of COUNTESS BLANKA, lit up for a ball.
Dance music, on violins and bassoons throughout.

Enter, L. U. E., SERVANT and HENRICO, in court dress.

HEN. I would see the Countess—on a message from the King.

Enter COUNTESS BLANKA, R.

HEN. (*bows, aside*). She was never more lovely. [*Exit SERVANT, R.*]

COUNT. I did not expect to see you so soon. I am sorry that you have to stoop to such expedients to gain an entrance here.

HEN. Lady, love does not need such cloaks. I did not think when I left last night, that I should ever come again.

COUNT. Then you have a message?

HEN. (*gives packet*). Yes, from the King.

COUNT. You are distant. What has the King to say?

HEN. He trusted me, doubly, as a subject, as a grateful friend—I simply say—there is the letter from the King.

COUNT. Why are you so cold?

HEN. I feel so.

COUNT. What—since I love you!

HEN. Once—'tis not now—I believed you—I know that you are not what you seem.

COUNT. I don't love you? Do you doubt me, when round me I call a thousand destroying angels when I set aside for you the love of others. Like a god, the King would make his realm my footstool, at a word. I tell you that I love you, and you alone! and yet you are of ice.

HEN. (*calmly*). What is the answer to the King?

COUNT. I will take it him myself!

HEN. The King perhaps perceives your perfidy. Like me, he may not be your dupe. I ask you for your answer. This is no time for tricks of coquetry. If I speak falsely to my liege, who has rested this trust in me, how could I be worthy of you or others—to what love requiring faith could I aspire?

COUNT. Speak for yourself. You are too arrogant. You seem a judge. Already do you rank me as accomplice in some crime? You might respect me, though I have too soon revealed my heart.

HEN. Revealed your heart? Displayed yourself. I know you for what you are, and my chief joy is that I do not need a love like yours.

Enter KING WENZEL, L. and C. D. He comes down slowly, unseen.

HENRICO. I am in debt to you for a few hours of sweet illusion. For so much have my thanks. But do not still affect to feel for those upon whose eager hopes you ruthlessly trample.

COUNT. I do not pretend. I hate the King! (*KING stands between them and lifts his dagger threateningly.*)*

KING (*after pause, sheathes his dagger and smiles grimly. In a sarcastic tone*). You have company! a festival! I hear music, but I do not see the guests. (*goes R.*) What ho, there! Your King is here!

Enter GUESTS, R. They range themselves R. and L. sides, during the following.

and would do honor to this betrothal festival.

ALL (*are now in*). Betrothal?

COUNT. Your Majesty has ample license for any jest he pleases.

KING. Jest! In sober earnest, the lovely Countess has taken pity on one of her admirers, and means to make him husband. Fit mate! My lords and ladies, gaze upon this gentle springald. (*meaning HENRICO*) You would never divine who is the object of this fair lady's choice. Come, guess! You first.

1ST LADY (*R., comes to HENRICO and walks round him. Affectedly*). A tailor—or a clerk in holiday clothes, who is not yet accustomed to them. (*remains L.*)

KING. Warm! not bad! You next!

2ND LADY (*R., comes to HENRICO*). I should say, a monk, whose tonsured hair has had time to grow, who would be a courtier. Faith, 'tis a good leg for a courtier! (*remains L.*)

KING. You guess not ill. Fair Countess, and betrothed of her—you shall lead the ball. Come! (*HENRICO takes the COUNTESS'S hand, and all face to go up*) Come, fair lady. I am for you! (*takes hand of 1ST LADY.*)

Enter STEINHERTZ, L. U. E. and C. D.

ALL (*in horror*). The headsman! (*they come down.*)

KING (*goes up*). What want you here? How dare you disturb the harmony of this fair assembly? (*R. C.*)

STEIN. (c.). My bond has escaped. I have the right to seek him, even in the King's palace.*

HEN. I am he! (*all who were near him, shrink away*) I am not here of my free will, nor have I suffered this cruel draught as of one of my own brewing. I came upon a message which I have delivered truly. Upon those who suspect me of foul play, fall all shameful thoughts. Pardon, lady—I had no evil wishes to you, and I say, with head uplifted, while I have a head to lift—there is no better gentleman here this night than I, the Headsman's Bond! (*goes up with STEINHERTZ. KING smiles, COUNTESS hangs her head. Picture.*)

QUICK CURTAIN.

ACT V.

SCENE.—*Room in Palace, in 4th grooves.*

Enter KING WENZEL, D. F. He comes down c. There being no entrance but D. F., none will be specified hereafter.

KING. The Countess has married Count Leschwitz. Oh, the fantastical sex! Tottering age preferred to lusty manhood! By Heaven, I have been a fool! Fool! I have been rivalled by my very servants! I shall be laughed at throughout my kingdom, and King Wenzel's discomfiture will be joked on in the beer-house, and sung by the beggars. 'Sdeath! has it come to this? (*walks about in rage*) I forgot, a throne is but narrow for two to stand on. I must take a wife—for I will not have my dynasty perish, and the people demand an empress, but no more love! no more heart-burning, no more jealousy! This resolution is made—recorded here, (*beats his breast*) and it shall have a red seal on it to-night!

Enter PAGE.

{ PAGE. Your Majesty! the headsman waits without.
KING. Send him hither.

Exit PAGE, and enter STEINHERTZ, followed by MARKITTA.

STEIN. Your Majesty's orders?

KING. Let the prisoner be brought in. (R. c.)

MARK. (*coming forward*). No!†

STEIN. What make you, here? Let go my arm.

MARK. I shall die myself if he is doomed.

KING. Your daughter here, Steinhertz? She should be kept at home. What wants she?

MARK. (*kneeling*). Sire, grant me a boon. Let that man's life be spared.

KING. I have sworn it, I cannot spare the bond.

MARK. But Heaven relieves man of such cruel oaths. Such an act of mercy will be a shining line in the story of your rule. Aye, this deed

* GUESTS. COUNTESS. KING. STEINHERTZ. HENRICO. GUESTS.
† KING. STEINHERTZ. MARKITTA.

of mercy will stand like a white-winged angel at your dying bed and point the way to heaven. (*the king shows tokens of impatience*) It will be the brightest jewel in your crown, that on reflection you crushed out the smouldering embers of your wrath. Let him live, and all my prayers will be for you!

KING. Away with her—for your own sake!

MARK. (*rises, sternly*). Since I cannot move you, I invite your anger!

KING. You defy me!

MARK. Yea, I like more to find you so inhuman, than have to thank a savage and relentless tyrant. All the hypocritical glories of your reign shall be hidden by this one act of cruelty, and in this atrocious thirst of blood will be summed up your reign. When I sink into my grave, and when they come to weep for my fate, all will say: "Here sleeps the victim of the tyrant!"

STEIN. Pardon her, sire, and pardon me. She is not forced to hide her feeling as I am. (*takes MARKITTA up c., affectionate y.*)

MARK. Father, promise me that when he is led out to die, to place me where I can see him—so will I be given the same death as he, for I shall not survive him. Promise me this!

STEIN. You shall see him.

MARK. Thanks, father. Oh! (*leans on STEINHERTZ, and they exeunt.*)

KING (*goes to c.*). Well, curse all the women! Death and blood! ho there! would you tarry all night?

Enter COUNT LESCHWITZ and COURTIERs. They come down L. and R.

KING *sits roughly on table R.*

LESCH. Your Majesty commanded us not to enter until summoned.

KING. You should forestall the King's commands, when they are matters of justice. It is a case of treason against King Wenzel. (*looks around*) I know of some who hide thoughts of treason in their hearts—let them see how I punish treason in the lower orders; and judge by that how I would deal with it in the higher. Who shrinks? who cowers? Is it you, Count Leschwitz! Steadier of limb you should be—or, is it your young wife, or old lumbago that unnerves you?

VOICE OF MARGARET VOLKNER (*at back*). Out of my way! he stays me at the peril of his head! I would see the King!

KING. What's this?

Enter MARGARET VOLKNER, excitedly.

KING. Another woman! (*rises*) Have I no guards?

MARG. Thank Heaven, no blood is split. I come in time!

KING. Who are you? (*R. c. front.*)

MARG. (*c.*). The widow of the Burgomaster of Nurnberg, the mother of the unhappy man condemned to die.

KING. I am sorry to see you now. We are not so merry as when we sipped the hypocress in your husband's parlor. We are busy, come to-morrow.

MARG. To-morrow will be too late. Innocent blood will have been shed, and that must not be! I have words for your ear which no one else must know. Send away these gentlemen.

KING. Are you mad, woman? (*aside*) There is something in her look and tone that tells me she is in earnest.

MARG. Go to the farthest chamber, and lock the door. (*the COURTIERs hesitate.*)

KING. Go! (*they begin to move*) Devil take you! (*they hurriedly exeunt*)
Get out! (*the PAGES, who are last, hastily skip out.*)

KING (*alone with MARGARET*). Now, Dame Margaret, you may speak. I would I could say you are welcome. I never have forgotten you or the good man Volkner. (*MARGARET goes up and lifts the tapestry of D. F., to make sure no one is in hearing; then comes down C., the KING on her right.*)

MARG. (*solemnly*). Sire, do not kill the bond!

KING. What I have said, I have said. The man is doomed.

MARG. In mercy to yourself, you must not.

KING. I have sworn it, as surely as I am the Emperor Charles's son.

MARG. You may spare him, and yet not break your oath.

KING. What do you mean?

MARG. The headsman's bond is the Emperor Charles's son.

KING (*draws his sword*). Blasphemer!

MARG. (*kneels and opens her arms to receive the stroke*). Son, kill YOUR MOTHER! (*Tableau.*)

KING (*staggers back and drops his sword*). You, MY mother? (*puts his hand to his forehead.*)

MARG. I am. (*rises.*)

KING. Speak out! Tales for children are not wilder.

MARG. Listen to what I have to say. Some twenty odd years ago, the cannon of the citadel announced to the trembling town of Nurnberg the birth of the heir of the Emperor. At that same hour, I gave birth to a boy. I lay in a swoon, and they forbore to rouse to me. After an hour or two, I woke, and I saw a poor sickly boy beside me. I accepted that child as my son. Ten years passed by, when, one night, an old woman, dying, called me to her bedside. I went, and then she told me that while I was in that swoon, the Empress, to whom had been born that sickly child, had—knowing of my state—sent and taken away my healthy boy, and left the weakling in its place. So, when I woke, I was ignorant of the substitution.

KING. Oh! the ravings of a maniac. There is no proof.

MARG. Pardon! I went to the Empress, and she confessed the fraud. (*KING is affected*) She implored me to keep the secret for the honor of the race. I loved the child, and I agreed, all the more because all the world declared that you gave promise of being worthy of the name of King.

KING. This is not true! not true! (*MARGARET gives him paper*) Ah! (*reads*) it is the Empress's handwriting! I am not the Emperor Charles's son! (*depressed with melancholy.*)

MARG. Do not be so sad! What have I done?

KING. Done? woman, you have overthrown a dynasty! (*pause*) Not Emperor Charles's son! I fall from the throne to be below the meanest of men.

MARG. No! he knows not of his station—it will be no loss to him.

KING. But what has he suffered! I will make amends.

MARG. That might betray you, sire.

KING. Palaces have ears. This will be known to-morrow throughout the land. (*L. C.*)

MARG. No! Rather than see you humbled, I would tear my tongue out by the roots.

KING. Wouldst thou do this for me? Then, indeed, you are my mother! (*embraces her*) But you know not King Wenzel! (*to her right*) I shall proclaim it from the palace-top, and be content to wander forth a beggar, after I recognize him.

MARG. Never! The Emperor knew of this deception, and yet he placed in your hand his sceptre. He meant you to reign. (*tears up paper*)

Now there are no proofs! you shall reign still. I will not have you degraded, and lose your titles, honor, and glory.

KING. Titles are nought! honor and glory—these are mine own and go with me—they are not the King's! I know my fate, and care not, losing so much if I must lose all. For a time, I might conceal from those around me the damning truth, but as I sank day by day deeper in the slough of lies and shame, I should feel my conscience sting me sharper, and some day I should shriek out, I am an impostor!

MARG. This must not be. One hope remains.

KING. Do not tempt me! I know what I lose. There is but one pang. I love my people! 'Tis them I care for. Will another hand bear as lightly on the reins and use the scourge as niggardly? Enough! He must know this story as I myself. Who waits there?

Enter PAGE.

PAGE. I, your Majesty! What is your pleasure?

MARG. Speak with him alone.

KING. Bring in the prisoner.

PAGE'S *enter*, followed by eight or more GUARDS, in the midst of whom is HENRICO.

Begone! (*exeunt GUARDS and PAGES*) and listen none of ye at the doors, if you would wear ears to-morrow!* (*to HENRICO*) If you were in my place, would'st spare me?

HEN. No! For, being you, I should not be a wise judge, but a tyrant who delights in blood. (*C., MARGARET goes L. up a little.*)

KING. I give your life.

HEN. I have wronged you! I crave your pardon, I was hasty. I recall my words.

KING. You were right. I meant to slay you. You owe your life to that lady.

HEN. My mother?

KING. I said, that lady. That is Dame Margaret, your mother was the Empress. Do not harass me with doubts or questions. Take my word for it, howsoever incredible. The Emperor Charles was your father. There—take him aside and tell him all. (*MARGARET and HENRICO go up c. where she speaks to him. He expresses surprise.*)

HEN. Mother, I do not understand.

KING (*aside*). Just Heaven, I am like a man who for an age believed his house was builded on a rock, and when the deluge came perceived the stone resolve to quicksand. In solemn presence of the august pair whom I believed my parents, I renounce my kingdom and all the aspirations of my soul in expiation to their memory. (*aloud*) Well, how long must I stand here? Does he know all?

MARG. I have convinced him. (*she and HENRICO come down.*)†

KING. You have been wronged, sir, not the less because unwittingly. I have been your worst foe. Your answer.

HEN. He that spoke to me was not my lord. So let that pass. Leave me a moment to myself. (*KING goes up with MARGARET and they converse*) Oh, thou with the Olympian front, hovering over me, prepare me for my greatness. How can I handle the sceptre of such a father? Bold and resolute I still might be, and yet below the level of that task. And

* MARGARET.

KING.

HENRICO.

† KING.

HENRICO.

MARGARET.

thou, pale Goddess of my earliest dreams, my mother, lend me thy gentleness and tenderly infuse a sweetness in the bitter cup of royalty—gilt without and jewelled, but within gall mingled with the wine. Under such great auspices who could not rule with majesty? and yet I approach the throne with undiminished awe! Imperial father, stand at my right side and direct the rod of office. Come to me in the night, Empress my mother, and fill my thoughts with goodness, that my waking words may win for years the verdict that while not unworthy of the crown, I won the higher meed—I was in no wise worthless judged by the example that you set.

KING (*comes down*). Hast thou decided?

HEN. Bear with me yet one moment. (*aside*) How easy sits the dignity on him. His eagle eye can pierce the blaze that luridly engilds the throne. I should be lost. I should falter when most my tread should be firm set. New to the duties, I should seek support, and be a puppet king, relying on my favorites, and in the end, I should be thrust from my kingdom pursued by the laughter of my people.

KING. Dost still hesitate? You risk nothing, and I lose all.

HEN. You have engaged to do me right?

KING. I will.

HEN. A short time since, my life was in your grasp, and you would have taken it——

KING. Death and fire! (*checks himself*) I forget.

HEN. Yet, I was then as now the Emperor Charles's son. In my creed, my life should be as precious in the sovereign's eyes as that of the meanest peasant.

KING. Zounds! do you seek to lecture me? Beware! my guards are within call. (*checks himself*) Ah! sir, you try my patience hard.

HEN. No longer. I have reflected. King Wenzel, I accept my birth-right! (*goes to the throne.*)

KING. Ah! I relinquish the throne. To-morrow the people and the state shall know. There is my crown. Wear it proudly. Let the King's justice take note of every little plaint—it must work largely. Do not disturb my laws, for they were framed in love. Have no favorites. A King needs no friends. There is my crown, and here (*kneels*) is my knee!

HEN. Far more than thy glories over the Gallic legions, greater than thy famed victories with the sword, is this—best of all victories—that over self, that wins back the crown, I resign it forever, and in my father's name recall thee to the throne. Rise, King Wenzel, thrice a king!

KING. Sir, in your father's name and yours, and for your people, whom I love, I accept. 'Tis with the joy with which again we vault into the saddle of a noble steed. (*they shake hands.*)

MARG. Now let me die, that have seen this duel between two noble hearts! These are my sons! (*KING goes up and opens tapestry, COURTIERs enter.*)

KING (*on throne*). My lords, this is the man whom the King delights to honor. Whosoever slights him, slights King Wenzel, and must deal with him.

Enter STEINHERTZ.

Ah! gossip, what seek you here?

STEIN. I come to claim the body of the prisoner.

HEN. You have offered me honors. I claim them now.

KING. Ask anything!

HEN. First, I love a woman.

KING. You mean the Countess! (*aside*) Poor Count Leschwitz! I must divorce her now!

HEN. I mean this man's daughter! *

KING. Anything. Steinhertz, bring to us that obstinate girl of thine!

STEIN. Break it gently to her. She thinks your life is sacrificed.
(*goes up to D. F., and leads in MARKITTA, who hangs her head, weeping*) Be tender with her.

KING. Markitta, I have not hurt the bond.

HEN. Look up, Markitta. (*she falls into his arms*) My life is spared!

MARK. Is it you?

HEN. The King wills our marriage.

MARK. Is this true?

HEN. Not only true, but he would give me honors.

MARK. Best that he has restored to you myself.

KING. Markitta, still covered with tears? Where is your late eloquence?

MARK. (*smiling*). Sire, grief has a hundred tongues. Joy is speechless.

KING. You must speak, and prompt me in what way to reward your father and your husband.

HEN. Restore to him his rank and property.

STEIN. As for rank, I do not value that. I only ask permission to retire to some remote spot where I shall seldom see man. As for my estates, some snug proprietor has settled on them. Do not disturb him.

KING. Have your own way, gossip. We had intended some mad revels to celebrate an ill-judged measure. Let it be a feast of the wedding-eve. I will abdicate for the nonce, and Markitta shall be queen of the festival. (*steps off throne.*)

HEN. (*laughing*). If she be queen, then, by your good leave, I will for this one night be king. Let no one take offence—to-morrow I resign my throne, content to stroll down the green lanes of home and happiness.

All form picture. Music.

* COURTIERS.

KING.
*

"

MARKITTA.
*

HENRICO.
*

MARGARET.
*

STEINHERTZ.
*

* COURTIERS.

SLOW CURTAIN

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means Right of Stage, facing the Audience; L. Left; C. Centre; R. C. Right of Centre; L. C. Left of Centre. D. F. Door in the Flat, or Scene running across the back of the Stage; C. D. F. Centre Door in the Flat; R. D. F. Right Door in the Flat; L. C. F. Left Door in the Flat; R. D. Right Door; L. D. Left Door; 1 E. First Entrance; 2 E. Second Entrance; U. E. Upper Entrance; 1, 2 or 3 G. First Second or Third Groove.



R. R. C. C. L. C.
The reader is supposed to be upon the stage facing the audience.

* COURTIERS.

HEN.

STEIN.

MARG.

KING.

COURTIERS.

SYNOPSIS.

The PROLOGUE, in a well-managed conversation, prepares the way for the spirited beginning of the play proper with Act I. A rural fete is being held outside the walls of Prague. MARQUART and YOUNKER SCHLIPPENBERG meet, and the latter assures the former that he will rid him of his eldest brother, HENRICO. As they leave MARKETTA and NURSE enter, the former expressing her warm desire to see some gentleman again, but NURSE urges her to leave. HENRICO and YOUNKER BENKO come on. MARKITTA exclaims, "Ah, there he is!" In a little while MARKITTA and NURSE depart, the former muttering, "Ah, here comes the Countess....How beautiful she is!" KING WENZEL, COUNTESS BLANKA and others enter. HEN. regards COUNTESS gravely. The COUNTESS at last sees HEN. and drops a feather from her fan at his feet. As the stage is cleared MARQ. and SCHLIP. come on, and plan to incite HEN. to challenge SCHLIP. A duel follows, in which HEN. stabs SCHLIP., when HEN. escapes by leaping from a bank; BLENK. is, however, surrounded. In the next scene KING WENZEL declares his passion to the COUNTESS. She retires as an outcry is raised, and the KING sees at a distance HEN. leap into the stream. It is sunset, and MARK. and NURSE are in front of STEINHERTZ's house. HEN., closely chased, enters, sword in hand. He falls inside the gate, and is dragged into the house by MARK. and NURSE; while the baffled crowd recedes at MARK.'s exclamation, "King's sanctuary." After a few days has passed, HEN. returns to consciousness, to find that he has been sheltered in the house of the public headsman—that MARK. is his daughter—that for a certain number of days he can enjoy immunity from death—but at the end of that time, unless he elects to become the headman's successor, nothing can save his life. Weakened by loss of blood and illness he consents. The mob are thus again baffled, and HEN. falls senseless, while MARK. bends over him with clasped hands.

In the third act HEN. is seen, sword in hand. He sadly soliloquizes over his dismal fortune, and breaks the sword which he can no longer wield in honor. He picks up a letter of his mother's and thrusts it in his breast, saying no one must ever know who he is. Then he hangs his head mournfully and thinks of the COUNTESS. MARK. enters by a secret door, and—although it wounds her heart—talks to him of the beautiful COUNTESS. Finally she offers to take a letter from him to the lady, and for that purpose she departs. HEN. wonders at her friendship, but does not recognize her love. STEIN., who has taken a fancy to HEN., relates to him his own dark history, and explains how he, a high nobleman, became the Headsman. Soon KING WENZEL comes in with MARK. to have a chat with "his gossip," STEIN. The KING suddenly recognizes HEN.—says he is a brave fellow, and shall have MARK. for his wife; but she refuses. The KING commands; but the Headsman reminds him that he alone commands there. The KING waives the point, and bids STEIN. prepare to join him in a secret visit to the Galloh Cellar, and tells HEN. to go with them, for he is a brave fellow. In the next scene MARQ. and SCHLIP. (who has recovered from his wounds) are in the cellar. They bang the table and call for wine. MARTHA, the hostess, bids them be quiet, adding that even the KING, it is said, visits the cellar in disguise. The two roysterers say they are the KING and his gossip, the HEADSMAN. KING, STEIN. and HEN. enter, and while the others sit at table HEN. leans against partition. HEN., who has seen MARQ. and SCHLIP., tells the KING that the man he is accused of slaying is before him, and with his own brother. The KING rises, and fiercely orders STEIN. to arrest the two scoundrels—tells

HEN. to take a night's rest, but adds, "Meet me at the Headsman's in the morning." MARQ. and SCHLIP. are borne off by the HEADSMAN's attendants. MARK., disguised as a boy, bears HEN.'s letter to the COUNTESS—surprise follows surprise—HEN. appears—the COUNTESS is walking with him in the garden, when the KING enters. He attacks MARK. (disguised as a boy), who is wounded by him. In the confusion the COUNTESS enters her house. HEN. finds MARK. wounded, and supporting her, bears her off.

In the fourth act, the KING is seen, furious at the falsity of the COUNTESS. He has a piece of cloth cut by his sword from the dress of a visitor to the COUNTESS. The prisoners, MARQ. and SCHLIP., are escorted in by STEIN. and HEN. The KING orders HEN. to strike off the head of MARQ. The former says that he cannot kill his brother. The KING stifles his rage, and says, "His life is yours." Then he bids HEN. go to the keeper of the wardrobe, and give a letter; he will be dressed in one of the sovereign's finest dresses; then he is told to go to the COUNTESS BLANKA, and say to her that the KING will present himself soon "in fitting company for one so pure and reproachless." After HEN. has gone the KING learns from STEIN. that the piece of cloth in his possession was cut from the jacket of HEN. The monarch becomes furious, and taking horse, gallops to the COUNTESS'. The company are all appalled at the KING's presence, and at the announcement that they have been making much of the HEADSMAN's BOND.

The fifth act is full of strong dramatic effects—the KING learning of some strange secrets, and being indebted to the magnanimity of HEN. for his throne. HEINHERTZ is pardoned, HEN. wedded to MARK.; the COUNTESS is forced to become the wife of the old courtier, and the KING devotes himself to the right government of his realm.

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85. Locked In with a Lady, sketch, 1 act. 1	1	eretta, 1 act.....1	1
87. Locked Out, comic scene.....1	2	132. Race for a Dinner, farce, 1 act.....10	
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170. Only Somebody, farce, 1 act.....4	2	1 act.....3	1
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97. Orange Blo-soms, comedietta, 1 act. 3	3	81. Vandyke Brown, farce, 1 act.....3	3
66. Orange Girl, drama, in prologue		124. Volunteer Review, farce, 1 act.... 6	6
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62. Peep o' Day, drama, 4 acts.....12	4	prologue.....6	
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